

APPENDIX H
COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE DEIS



Brooklyn Borough President Recommendation

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

120 Broadway, 31st Floor, New York, NY 10271

CalendarOffice@planning.nyc.gov

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Return this completed form with any attachments to the Calendar Information Office, City Planning Commission, Room 2E at the above address.
2. Send one copy with any attachments to the applicant's representatives as indicated on the Notice of Certification.

APPLICATION #: RIVER RING – 210425 MMK, 220061 MLK, 220062 ZMK, 220063 ZRK, 220064 ZSK, 220070 ZSK

Applications submitted by River Street Partners LLC, pursuant to Sections 197-c, 199 and 201 of the New York City Charter, and Section 5-430 et seq. of the New York City Administrative Code for the following actions concerning a property in Brooklyn Community District 1 (CD 1):

- An amendment to the City Map involving:
 - The elimination, discontinuance, and closing of Metropolitan Avenue between River Street and the United States Pierhead Line (USPL)
 - The elimination, discontinuance, and closing of a portion of North First Street from a point 200 feet west of River Street and the USPL
 - The adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby; including authorization for any acquisition or disposition of real property related thereto, in accordance with Map No. Y-2760 dated August 16, 2021, and signed by the Brooklyn borough president
- To facilitate a landfill of approximately 6,230 square feet (sq. ft). located in the East River, in connection with a proposed mixed-use development, within a large-scale general development (LSGD), on property generally bounded by North Third Street, River Street, North First Street, a line 200 feet northwesterly of River Street, Grand Ferry Park, and the USPL (Block 2355, Lots 1 and 20; Block 2361, Lots 1, 20, and 21, and Block 2376, Lot 50, and the above reference intended demapped portions of Metropolitan Avenue and North First Street), in a proposed C6-2 District.
- An amendment of the Zoning Map changing from an M3-1 District to a C6-2 District property bounded by North Third Street, River Street, North First Street, a line 200 feet northwesterly of River Street, a northeasterly boundary line of Grand Ferry Park, and the USPL, and changing from an M3-1 District to an M1-4 District property bounded by North Third Street, Kent Avenue, North First Street, and River Street, and subject to the conditions of CEQR Declaration E-636. The proposed zoning text amendment would designate a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area coterminous with the area proposed to be designated as a C6-2 zoning district.
- An application in connection with a proposed mixed-use development, within a LSGD, on property generally bounded by North Third Street, River Street, North First Street, a line 200

feet northwesterly of River Street, Grand Ferry Park, and the US Pierhead Line (Block 2355, Lots 1 and 20; Block 2361, Lots 1, 20 and 21, Block 2376, Lot 50, and the demapped portions of Metropolitan Avenue and North First Street), in a C6-2 District, for the grant of special permits pursuant to the following Sections of the New York City Zoning Resolution (ZR):

- ZR Section 74-743(a)(2):
 - To modify the height and setback, floor area distribution, maximum residential tower size, and maximum width of building walls facing a shoreline per requirements of ZR Section 62-341 (Developments on land and platforms)
- Section 74-743(a)(13):
 - To allow existing land projecting seaward of the bulkhead line to be replaced or reconstructed with new platforms and such platform be included as part of the upland lot
 - To allow such new piers and platforms to be considered lot area for the purposes of determining allowable floor area, dwelling units, and other bulk regulations of ZR Section 62-31(b) & (c) (Bulk Computations on Waterfront Zoning Lots)
- To waive the requirements of ZR Sections 62-242 (Uses on new piers and platforms), 62-54 (Requirements for Public Access on Piers), and ZR Section 62-63 (Design Requirements for Public Access on Piers and Floating Structures)
- An application for the grant of a special permit pursuant to Section 74-533 of the ZR to reduce the number of required accessory off-street parking spaces from 40 percent to 20 percent, for dwelling units in a development within a Transit Zone, which includes at least 20 percent of all dwelling units as income-restricted housing units, in connection with a proposed mixed-use development, within a LSGD, on property generally bounded by North Third Street, River Street, North First Street, a line 200 feet northwesterly of River Street, Grand Ferry Park, and the USPL (Block 2355, Lots 1 and 20; Block 2361, Lots 1, 20 and 21; Block 2376, Lot 50, and the intended to be demapped portions of Metropolitan Avenue and North First Street), in a C6-2 District

The requested actions are intended to facilitate two mixed-use towers, one at 49 stories and an approximately 560'-tall tower (600', including bulkhead) and the second being 64 stories and an approximately 710'-tall tower (750' including bulkhead). In total the proposed development is intended to be approximately 1,158,800 sq. ft. (6.17 FAR), with approximately 1,050 dwelling units, a 30,000 sq. ft. community center, 79,000 sq. ft. of commercial space, including office space and local retail, approximately 250 accessory attended parking spaces for at least 20 percent of market-rate dwelling units, 538 required bicycle parking spaces, and approximately 2.9 acres of new public open space composed of approximately 2.32 acres of accessible in-river space and 0.86 acres of intertidal area. Approximately 263 units (25 percent of residential floor area) would be affordable to households earning an average 60 percent of Area Median Income (AMI). Local retail uses on the ground floor of both buildings would activate street frontages along North First and Third streets, and River Street, as well as along the adjacent publicly accessible open space. No loading docks are required, and none will be provided. A landfill action would add approximately 6,319 sq. ft. of landfill as part of the waterfront public open space plan.

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY DISTRICT NO. 1

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

RECOMMENDATION

- APPROVE
- APPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITIONS

- DISAPPROVE
- DISAPPROVE WITH
MODIFICATIONS/CONDITION

SEE ATTACHED

Eric L. Adams

BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

October 5, 2021

DATE

RECOMMENDATION FOR: RIVER RING – 210425 MMK, 220061 MLK, 220062 ZMK, 220063 ZRK, 220064 ZSK, 220070 ZSK

River Street Partners LLC submitted applications pursuant to Sections 197-c, 199 and 201 of the New York City Charter, and Section 5-430 et seq. of the New York City Administrative Code for the following actions concerning a property in Brooklyn Community District 1 (CD 1):

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On September 27, 2021 Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams held a public hearing on these applications. There were 42 speakers on the item with five in opposition and 37 in support, including area residents and business owners, members of 32BJ Service Employees International Union (32BJ SEIU), and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America New York City & Vicinity District Council of Carpenters (Carpenters' Union), and representatives of the YMCA. Those in favor underscored the need for affordable housing in Brooklyn, and the environmental benefits of the project, including coastal resiliency. Representatives of several non-profit organizations including the Billion Oyster Project and the Waterfront Alliance voiced support for ecological restoration and edge design. Some supporters, including North Brooklyn Neighbors, urged deeper affordability at 40 percent AMI. Others argued against a reduction the height of the towers and urged eliminating the proposed parking. Those in opposition cited excessive density on the Williamsburg waterfront and other quality-of-life concerns.

In response to Borough President Adams' inquiry as to which of the conditions articulated by Brooklyn Community Board 1 (CB 1) in its recommendation the developer intends to meet and which ones might be partially considered, the applicant noted that the affordable housing lottery for One South First Street would commence in six to eight weeks; that the applicant would be open to increasing the number of affordable units, though it's unlikely that the project would reach 50 percent affordability; that River Street Partners, LLC would be willing to include more family-sized units and commit to the requested minimum bedroom size; that it would advocate for the completion of Bushwick Inlet Park; that it would strive for a carbon-neutral development and study the feasibility of sustainable technologies, including geothermal heating; that River Ring would provide a contextual façade and active streetscape; that the developer is holding discussions with the Carpenters' Union regarding construction jobs; that the project would be subject to rent stabilization laws, and regulated by the New York State Division of Housing and Community

Renewal (HCR); that the developer will work with the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) to minimize the impacts of trash pickup; that it will share the YMCA plans but cannot tie the space's buildout/operation to residential unit occupancy due to New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) approval processes and YMCA control of its facility, and finally, that reducing the project size by 33 percent would be financially infeasible and would impede the applicant's ability to meet other board conditions.

In response to Borough President Adams' inquiry regarding the qualifying income range for prospective households based on household size, the anticipated rents based on the number of bedrooms, and the distribution of units by bedroom size, the applicant stated that the distribution would be determined closer to construction. The affordability program would include a combination of units at 40 and 60 percent of AMI, though in response to additional inquiry, the representative noted that the average rent collection would be 60 percent AMI with units at higher AMIs dependent on future government incentives.

In response to Borough President Adams' inquiry as to whether one of the community's affordable housing non-profits would be used in the tenant selection process to ensure the highest level of participation from CD 1 and whether the development's marketing strategy would include a financial literacy component to qualify residents for the MIH lottery, the applicant stated intent to aggressively market the affordable units, starting with a financial literacy campaign, noted that it has historically partnered with local organizations, and said that it would consult elected officials in the selection of an administering agent.

In response to Borough President Adams' inquiry regarding the incorporation of sustainable features such as passive house design; blue, green, or white roof covering; solar roof and/or façade panels; geothermal energy; New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) rain gardens, and/or wind turbines, the applicant explained that the development would have an onsite wastewater treatment plant, and that stormwater would be diverted from city sewers, treated, and then directed through two private outfalls into the East River. The representative also expressed interest in exploring new technologies, including solar facade materials.

In response to Borough President Adams' inquiry regarding the inclusion and participation of locally-owned business enterprises (LBEs) and minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBEs) in the construction process, the applicant stated intent to meet and exceed MWBE participation goals and conduct extensive local hiring local hiring efforts in partnership with St. Nicks Alliance (SNA).

Prior and subsequent to the hearing, Borough President Adams received extended testimony and letters in support from four individuals, as well as Evergreen, SNA, the Regional Plan Association (RPA), North Brooklyn Neighbors, and the Waterfront Alliance.

Consideration

CB 1 voted to approve this application with conditions on September 9, 2021. The board requested that Two Trees:

- Rent all affordable housing units in their One South First Street development to honor prior community affordable housing commitments
- Reduce the project's total number of apartment units by 33 percent to mitigate anticipated adverse impacts to subway transit, vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic, wastewater, street sanitation, waste storage and collection, and open space resources
- Increase the number of total affordable units to 50 percent to support deeper diversity and affordability in the neighborhood
- Configure 60 percent of the affordable units as two- and three-bedroom units to encourage long-term family occupancy
- Ensure that one bedroom within the affordable units is at least 128 square feet to accommodate bedroom furniture, a closet, and efficient movement

- Redesign the towers so that they are significantly less obtrusive and oppressive in feel and fit more contextually with nearby structures and the historic fabric of the neighborhood
- Negotiate in good faith with the New York City & Vicinity District Council of Carpenters to ensure the project adheres to the best and safest construction practices, and with local workforce organizations to provide service jobs for area applicants
- Provide funding in perpetuity for a local, independent agency or organization to oversee and enforce the rental fees and increases of affordable and market-rate apartments
- Present and execute a plan, together with the City of New York, to manage the increased volume of refuse that has resulted from new development in the area, and would be exacerbated by this large-scale project
- Utilize a fossil-free energy source such as a geothermal heat loop system instead of a natural gas reliant system for heating, which will work to have the project more aggressively meet the challenging but critical goals of the New York City Climate Protection Act, Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and those set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- Prior to rezoning approval, present community facility architectural plans verifying that the YMCA will serve both the Greenpoint and Williamsburg communities as well as 250 schoolchildren annually, and show that the center's size and location — as well as its pool, locker rooms, saunas, facility/pool access, elevator, pool depth and lane width, lifeguard station, staging area and pool equipment, weight rooms, full gym arena, and exercise rooms — are adequate as a full-service facility
- Ensure that the community facility is built out and operational before the building is occupied as rental housing

The board also requested that the City fund the full completion of Bushwick Inlet Park in its 10-year capital plan to mitigate current open space deficiencies that would be exacerbated by River Ring and other planned waterfront housing developments that would sharply increase the area's population.

The River Ring site consists of six tax lots on three waterfront blocks and portions of Metropolitan Avenue and North First Street between River Street and the pierhead line that would be demapped as part of the application. The development site is approximately 399,780 sq. ft., with 137,506 sq. ft. of upland lot portion and a 235,784 sq. ft. of seaward lot portion that includes 19,582 sq. ft. of existing in-water structures qualifying as "piers" or "platforms" as defined in ZR Section 62-11. The site has approximately 464 feet of frontage on River Street, 200 feet of frontage on North First Street, and 283 feet of frontage on North Third Street.

The full rezoning area fronting the East River, Kent Avenue, and North Third Street is approximately 441,660 sq. ft. Per the application, the development site would be rezoned from M3-1 to C6-2 to enable the River Ring proposal. The project area includes two non-applicant blocks between Kent Avenue and River Street that would be changed from M3-1 to M1-4. The block on the north side of Metropolitan Avenue is a 22,640 sq. ft. property improved with 210 Kent Avenue, a recently constructed six-story commercial office building. A vacant, 13,378 sq. ft. property, owned by Con Edison, is located to the south of Metropolitan Avenue.

The requested actions would enable a development of two-mixed use towers of 600 and 710 feet with a total floor area ratio (FAR) of 6.17 should the proposed eliminated street sections be consolidated as part of the River Ring development site. This represents approximately 1,158,000 sq. ft. of which more than 90 percent would be designated for residential use. The 49-story primarily residential tower would cover 15,070 sq. ft. of the site, while the 64-story primarily residential tower would cover 13,922 sq. ft. The towers would be massed to shift bulk away from the significant open areas along the shoreline, on seaward structures, and on the central portion of the development site.

The River Ring development area would include 170,103 sq. ft. of upland portion, and a 229,677 sq. ft. seaward portion, including 28,454 sq. ft. of new in-water structures. River Ring would significantly expand public access along the North Brooklyn waterfront with 2.96 acres of new open space, 3.17 acres of in-water recreation space and intertidal area, as well as with 1.3 miles of pedestrian walkways.

River Ring has been described as having attended parking for approximately 250 cars, though parking for the special permit would allow 26.7 percent of the 787 market rate apartments, which would require a minimum of 210 parking spaces. Such spaces would be accessed from the southern tower via North First Street. There would also be 538 required bicycle parking spaces. The towers would have ground floors with wraparound retail as well as lobbies for commercial office, community facility and residential use to activate street frontages along North Third Street, North First Street, and River Street as well as along the site's open space.

The surrounding context includes a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential uses. North of the site, along the Williamsburg waterfront, the predominant housing type is high-rise apartment towers, built after the 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg rezoning. The blocks to the east of the project area contain a mix of medium-density elevator buildings and multi-family homes. Commercial uses are scattered along Kent and Wythe avenues. To the south is the Domino Sugar Large LSGD site, which is currently under construction, though Domino Park has been open to the public since the summer of 2018. Additional open space resources include the small Grand Ferry Park, North Fifth Street Pier and Park, and the partially completed Bushwick Inlet Park.

Brooklyn is one of the fastest growing boroughs in the New York City metropolitan area. Its ongoing renaissance has ushered in extraordinary changes that were virtually unimaginable even a decade ago. Unfortunately, Brooklyn's success has led to the displacement of longtime residents who can no longer afford to live in their neighborhoods. Borough President Adams is committed to addressing Brooklyn's affordable housing crisis through the creation and preservation of units for very low- to middle-income households.

Borough President Adams supports the development of underutilized land to address the City's need for affordable housing. The proposed development would be consistent with Mayor Bill de Blasio's goal of achieving 300,000 affordable housing units over the next decade, according to "Housing New York: A Five-Borough, Ten-Year Plan," as modified in 2017. It is Borough President Adams' policy to support the development of affordable housing and seek for such housing to remain "affordable forever," wherever feasible.

Borough President Adams supports actions to facilitate the River Ring development based on the expectation of permanently affordable residential floor area. As represented, 25 percent of the anticipated 1,050 apartments would be pursuant to MIH Option 1. Such residential floor area, resulting from additional zoning rights, would be affordable in perpetuity. Such development is consistent with Borough President Adams' policy for new residential developments to yield permanently affordable units.

In CD 1 and across New York City, there is a pressing need for affordable and stable housing among elderly adults, homeless households, low-income families, and other populations. Increasing the supply of affordable apartments for a range of incomes and household types in mixed-use buildings is a critical strategy for promoting a sustainable neighborhood and city.

The MIH program targets affordable housing units to a broad range of incomes, consistent with Borough President Adams' objective to extend such opportunities to households at various AMI tiers. MIH Option 1 would designate 25 percent of the floor area as affordable to households at an average 60 percent AMI, of which 40 percent must be offered at 40 percent AMI. Development adhering to

the MIH program is consistent with Borough President Adams' policy that income-restricted housing remains affordable in perpetuity.

River Ring would implement innovative coastal flooding measures, as a major component of its plan. The proposed breakwaters and groin would substantially reduce damage to public waterfront open space and upland residential buildings from tall flood waves. The elongated shoreline resulting from the planned park and protective cove would help dissipate energy from storm surges. The building design would utilize dry and wet floodproofing strategies, to protect residents and mechanical equipment. Borough President Adams believes that this should be the standard that developers should aspire to replicate for shoreline projects where bulkheads are not necessary.

Borough President Adams believes that the requested density is appropriate, as the development site is convenient to public transportation. River Ring would be accessible via the B32 bus, which makes stops along Kent Avenue, as well as the Q59, available south of Grand Street. The closest subway station, the Bedford Avenue stop of the 14th Street-Canarsie Local L train, is six blocks northeast of the site. The North Williamsburg stop of the NYC Ferry East River route is two blocks north at North Fifth Street. The area is also well-served by Citi Bike, with a large docking station at Kent Avenue and North Seventh Street, and is well-connected to the Brooklyn Greenway and other bicycle infrastructure.

Borough President Adams supports applications enabling the development of River Ring. He calls on the City and River Street Partners, LLC to direct the proceeds of the roadbed sale as either a surface easement or tax lot to fund Bushwick Inlet Park. Furthermore, River Street Partners, LLC should guarantee the represented degree of affordability and provide additional affordable housing, as well as provide a family-oriented bedroom mix, maximize outreach to seniors, provide space for community use, incorporate resiliency and sustainability measures, implement Vision Zero improvements, increase bike parking, include electric charging stations, promote car-share, and provide for local hiring. He also calls on the Administration to qualify rent-burdened households for affordable housing lotteries, and fund Bushwick Inlet Park, as well as for the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to improve area transit infrastructure.

Adequate Funding for Bushwick Inlet Park

The 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg Rezoning was expected to result in 50 acres of new parkland along the East River waterfront. Due to unanticipated circumstances, the Bayside Oil and CitiStorage sections of Bushwick Inlet Park remain unfunded for construction. Borough President Adams shares the community's concerns regarding the delay in development of the park. Though Bushwick Inlet Park was established when the 2005 rezoning was adopted, its development has not kept pace with the high-rise residential construction in the last 15 years. To date, only the southern section has been completed and a middle section is now underway. However, the resulting assemblage allowed for environmental analysis of the former Bayside Oil site, as well as the section under construction between Bayside Oil and CitiStorage. Still, significant funding is still required to advance the master plan.

As part of the River Ring development, the proposed street bed elimination of a section of Metropolitan Avenue and North First Street, the City would be selling either an easement of such area or the resulting tax lot without the development rights from the adoption of the requested zoning. According to the special permit drawings, the applicant is proposing to remove 26,490 sq. ft. of mapped street bed. If the rezoning is approved, such land would provide 190,728 sq. ft. of development rights (at 7.2 FAR) that the City would retain if it would sell the tax lots resulting from the former street bed segments that would be merged into the River Ring tax lots. Alternatively, these lots would become independent tax lots remaining in City-ownership. In the latter instant, it would then provide River Street Partners, LLC, easements to the full surface area to allow for open space development. With either outcome, the sale should not be expected to generate significant revenue. Though, Borough President Adams believes that the proceeds

should be reinvested in the community, specifically as additional funding toward advancing the completion of Bushwick Inlet Park is a high-priority issue for CB 1, its elected officials and the community at-large.

Therefore, the mapping agreement for the discontinuation and closing of Metropolitan Avenue and North First Street should include a condition that the sale of the City-owned right-of-way segment, as either easements or as tax lots, to be one dollar, further conditioned on adequate demonstration that the remainder of the proceeds of fair market value have been deposited into a New York City Comptroller's Office Fiduciary Account for use by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) to advance the development of Bushwick Inlet Park.

Realizing Appropriate Public Benefit of Affordable Housing Floor Area for the Requested Zoning

Borough President Adams believes that significant upzonings should yield more affordable housing than rezonings that do not seek a comparable increase in density. Throughout his tenure as borough president, he has considered requests for substantial bulk increases that resulted in the development of 100 percent affordable housing. For other upzoning requests, he has consistently called for applicants to exceed MIH by providing additional floor area and/or more deeply affordable units.

Borough President Adams believes that public purpose based on MIH floor area alone does not capture the full value of upzoning from an M3-1 district, which does not permit housing construction, to a C6-2 (R8 residential equivalent) MIH district, with its maximum FAR of 7.2. Such a change of use and FAR increase results in a windfall of market-rate development compared to what is permitted as-of-right. There is thus a significant difference between drastic upzonings that unlock residential FAR and more modest ones that convert lower-density residential districts to higher density ones. Additionally, any zoning district in excess of R6A lacks leverage through MIH to induce more affordable housing floor area. The proposed rezoning would substantially enrich the project area with residential development rights without any obligation to provide deeper or greater affordability.

As this inequity cannot be rectified directly through MIH, Borough President Adams believes that increasing the number of affordable units while lowering the target household incomes is possible by blending what is required according to MIH with a voluntary special bulk permit. However, as the ZR does not provide such a special permit, he believes that the applicant could achieve equivalent public benefit through a legally binding mechanism.

Borough President Adams concurs that a C6-2 (R8 residential equivalent) would be an appropriate modification to the zoning map. However, to justify a C6-2 MIH district at this site, the developer should commit to providing additional affordable units based on a rent roll consistent with MIH Option 1. In addition, Borough President Adams believes that for this particular development, it would be more in keeping with community objectives to realize more affordable housing as opposed to the extent of parking normally required by the ZR.

To determine the appropriate amount of excess affordable housing floor area, it is helpful to calculate the site's development potential according to two residential zoning districts, the R8A MIH and the lower density R7A MIH, which stipulates a FAR of 4.6. The current M3-1 zoning permits only 2.0 FAR or approximately 314,175 sq. ft. of non-residential development based on ZR regulations. However, under the requested C6-2 MIH district, without consideration of the proposed demapped street sections, the remainder of the development site with a lot area of 161,454 sq. ft. would achieve approximately 1,162,469 sq. ft. of total development rights. With the represented 79,000 sq. ft. of commercial office and retail use, and 30,000 of zoning floor area for community facility use (more floor area would be below the curb level and would not be counted as zoning floor area) 1,049,800 sq. ft. or 6.5 FAR of River Ring would be available for residential floor area (including MIH).

Borough President Adams believes that a portion of these rights might be used to advance further public benefit. Based on the information above, the project area would provide 262,450 sq. ft. for permanently affordable residential floor area, i.e., the MIH Option 1 obligation. With C6-2 zoning, having 109,000 sq. ft. commercial and community facility floor area, River Street Partners, LLC would realize 787,350 sq. ft. of market rate residential floor area. In all, there would be 230,334 sq. ft. more market-rate residential floor area than if the site were zoned R7A MIH, with Option 1, and used exclusively for residential development.

Borough President Adams believes that if the 1.9 FAR increment remains the same between R7A and the resulting residential floor area with retention of 109,000 sq. ft. of commercial office, community facility and/or retail space, the R8 equivalent C6-2 district should yield additional affordable floor area to increase the project's public benefit. He typically seeks to set aside 50 percent of the FAR increment exceeding R7A MIH and 6.5 MIH regulated floor area for permanently affordable housing in lieu of the MIH Option 1 25 percent requirement. These units would be offered at Option 1 AMIs and rents, with 40 percent targeted to households earning 40 percent AMI and made affordable in perpetuity.

The additional 25 percent increment of 1.9 FAR would yield approximately 76,690 sq. ft. of affordable housing floor area on a 60 percent AMI basis beyond the required 262,450 sq. ft. pursuant to MIH Option 1. Linking a substantial amount of market-rate floor area beyond R7A MIH to the developer benefit of a zoning district with the higher C6-2 MIH FAR would provide sufficient incentive to seek such zoning district while generating the publicly desired affordability. Such affordable housing floor area — both the standard MIH requirement and additional area noted above — should also provide a family-oriented bedroom mix with more two and three-bedroom units.

Borough President Adams understands that the developer would be forgoing more profitable market rate residential FAR, even when it requires subsidizing permanently affordable housing floor area through the represented community facility zoning floor area. Should the City Council seek to mandate that community floor area include below-market space to promote locally desired uses, such as the represented YMCA, Borough President Adams believes that a nominal reduction of the recommended additional affordable housing floor area increase would be warranted.

To meet the threshold of public benefit necessary for approval of C6-2 MIH zoning, any residential FAR increment above R7A MIH should require provision of affordable housing floor area at a rate in lieu of the standard MIH Option 1 with permanent affordability. The developer should be required to memorialize the additional 1.9 FAR with more than 25 percent permanently affordable floor area and average rent not exceeding 60 percent AMI. Alternatively, the 60 percent AMI average rent collection could be marginally reduced as the warranted public benefit.

Therefore, Borough President Adams believes that the CPC and/or City Council should condition the requested C6-2 MIH district on a legal mechanism that commits a combined additional percentage of 76,690 sq. ft. of affordable housing at an average rent of 60 percent AMI, or modest decrease in the 60 percent AMI average rent collection. The City Council should obtain written commitments from River Street Partners, LLC to file a legally binding mechanism that commits an increased percentage of permanently affordable housing floor area or reduction of AMI below 60 percent.

Guaranteeing the Recommended Affordability

Borough President Adams notes that ULURP application 220070 ZSK seeks to reduce the 40 percent parking requirement for the represented 787 unrestricted market rate housing units to a 26.7 percent requirement. By reducing the parking provided from 315 to 210 required parking spaces, the applicant would realize the represented publicly-accessible open space without subsurface constraints and avoid significant sub-surface construction — inclusive of costly ground water management — to accommodate a larger and/or deeper construction of the garage. He believes

that his recommendation for more extensive floor area is commensurate with the realized developer benefit of such cost avoidance of constructing a larger volume needed to accommodate the additional 105 normally required parking spaces. To memorialize his recommendation for additional affordable housing floor area, Borough President Adams believes that the ZR 74-533 special permit should be conditioned on developer obligation to increase permanently affordable housing from the MIH requirement of 25 percent of the residential floor area by an additional 76,690 sq. ft.

Finding ZR 74-533(a) requires consultation with the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), which can be used to codify and mandate the recommended 76,690 sq. ft. of affordable housing floor area consistent with MIH Option 1 ZR requirements. Such consultation should produce a letter to the City Council submitted prior to its final determination on the application.

Therefore, prior to considering the application, the City Council should obtain from River Street Partners, LLC a written obligation from HPD attesting that the proposed affordable housing floor area would be increased by 76,690 sq. ft. and memorialized via a legally binding mechanism, such as the ZR 74-533(a) obligation to consult with HPD.

Bedroom Mix

When reviewing rezoning proposals for affordable housing developments, Borough President Adams seeks a unit mix that adequately reflects the needs of low- and moderate-income families. River Street Partners, LLC has not disclosed the intended bedroom distribution within the affordable or market-rate units at River Ring. As such, there is no guarantee that the final bedroom mix would be consistent with Borough President Adams' policy to achieve family-oriented affordable housing units.

Borough President Adams believes that right-sizing the bedroom distribution within the affordable housing floor area is more important than maximizing the number of MIH units. The only indication of the unit mix is the represented gross unit size of 1,000 sq. ft. Given that most floors in the River Ring towers would be 12,600 sq. ft. and the number of stories served by elevators, there would be a high ratio of vertical core elements consisting of elevator shafts and stairwells in proportion to areas within individual apartment units. Such configuration is likely to achieve 80 to 85 percent efficiency between gross floor area and net area of the apartments. As such, the average apartments might be in the range of 800 to 850 sq. ft. However, there is no other indication that the River Ring development would provide an adequate distribution of family-sized apartments. Development pursuant to MIH lacks leverage to require affordable units with multiple bedrooms. Borough President Adams believes that it is appropriate to use discretionary land use actions to advance policies that constrain what would be permitted as-of-right.

While it might be possible for developments with net apartment size ranging between 800 and 850 sq. ft. to be consistent with such policy, Borough President Adams seeks a binding commitment to secure what has been represented to the community. For this project, it is important to mandate that the developer provide affordable housing pursuant to ZR Section 23-96(c)(1)(ii), with at least 50 percent of the units containing two or three bedrooms and at least 75 percent configured with one or more bedrooms.

Therefore, prior to considering the application, the City Council should obtain written commitments from River Street Partners, LLC that would require that at least 50 percent of the River Ring affordable units to have two or three bedrooms, and at least 75 percent to have one or more bedrooms.

Maximizing Affordable Housing Opportunities for Seniors

In addition to family-sized units, there is a pressing need to build affordable apartments for the elderly, many of whom are of limited means. As noted in the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP)'s Zoning for Quality and Affordability (ZQA) study, New York's senior population is expected to grow 40 percent by 2040. The combination of rising housing costs across Brooklyn and declining production of age-based affordable housing has created a severe rent burden for seniors. Many elderly households are

struggling to remain in their homes and are exhausting their life's savings to keep up with living expenses until they are displaced from their communities.

A significant number of elderly households have negligible income and are at risk for displacement. As the Federal government has moved away from funding affordable housing for seniors, too few such rental apartments are being built, leaving tremendous demand for age-based affordable housing. As a result, many elderly households are experiencing increased and unsustainable rent burdens. One of Borough President Adams' top priorities is to help Brooklyn seniors secure affordable housing and remain in their neighborhoods. He seeks the advancement of more City projects, such as this proposal, which would result in permanently affordable units for older residents.

While Borough President Adams typically seeks a 50/50 blend of studios, one-bedrooms, two-bedrooms, and three-bedrooms, he believes that studio and one-bedroom units rented at 40 and 50 percent AMI might be affordable to senior households. With targeted marketing efforts, it is reasonable to expect that a greater share of studios and one-bedrooms at lower AMIs would be awarded to seniors. Borough President Adams calls on River Street Partners, LLC to conduct significant outreach to older residents of Greenpoint and Williamsburg, as part of its marketing strategy.

Therefore, prior to considering the application, the City Council should obtain written commitments from River Street Partners, LLC memorializing intended outreach efforts to seniors earning up to 40 percent AMI, or 50 percent AMI for dual-person households, to maximize their participation in the River Ring affordable housing lottery.

Maximizing Community Participation in the Affordable Housing

The ZR requires inclusionary housing units to be overseen by a non-profit administering agent, unaffiliated with the for-profit development entity, except when otherwise approved by HPD. The administering non-profit is responsible for ensuring that affordable housing complies with the regulatory agreement that governs the development's affordable housing plan. Tasks include verifying a prospective tenant household's qualifying income and approving the rents of such affordable units. The administering non-profit is responsible for submitting an affidavit to HPD attesting that the initial lease-up of the units is consistent with the income requirements and following up with annual affidavits to ensure compliance.

It is Borough President Adams' policy for housing non-profits to play a role in maximizing community participation in local affordable housing opportunities. CD 1 is served by several organizations with a proven record of marketing affordable housing units and promoting lottery eligibility such as Churches United for Fair Housing (CUFFH), Los Sures/Southside United HDFC, the North Brooklyn Development Corporation, SNA, and the United Jewish Organization (UJO). River Street Partners, LLC could retain one or more of these entities as affordable housing administrator(s) and/or marketing agent(s) for the project to qualify CD 1 residents for the River Ring affordable housing lottery. Such efforts should be undertaken in consultation with the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President, CB 1, and local elected officials.

Borough President Adams believes that prior to considering the application, the City Council should obtain written commitments from River Street Partners, LLC to utilize one or more local affordable housing non-profits to serve as the administering and/or marketing agent and promote lottery readiness.

Securing Community Facility Floor Area for Local Arts/Cultural Groups, Non-Profit Organizations and Recreational Uses

Borough President Adams regularly receives requests for assistance from arts/cultural groups and community non-profits seeking affordable space in Brooklyn. These organizations play an important role in the neighborhoods they serve but often struggle to obtain the space to expand and sustain their programs. It has been Borough President Adams' policy to review discretionary land use actions for opportunities to promote cultural and non-profit uses.

In June 2016, Borough President Adams released "All the Right Moves: Advancing Dance and the Arts in Brooklyn," a report examining challenges for artists in the borough, with accompanying recommendations. The report highlighted the benefits of arts and dance, which include maintaining physical fitness, promoting creative self-expression, and making significant contributions to the vibrant culture of Brooklyn. Among the difficulties faced by the Brooklyn arts community is an absence of diversity — according to 2000 United States Census data, fewer than half the individuals working in dance are people of color. Additionally, public funding for the arts in New York City has shrunk dramatically in recent years: by 37 percent from the New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA), by 15 percent from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and by 16 percent from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA).

Data show that cultural programs generate a variety of positive effects, which include combating the borough's high rate of obesity. As of 2016, 61 percent of Brooklyn adults are overweight or obese, according to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). Research by the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York has found that such activities also help children succeed in school. Moreover, demand for cultural programs continues to grow across Brooklyn. A 2015 report by the Center for an Urban Future (CUF) found a 20 percent increase in attendance at events organized by local cultural institutions since 2006.

Borough President Adams believes that the inclusion of arts/cultural entities and non-profit organizations at River Ring would provide enrichment to the community. The development's location is advantageous given the area's considerable residential density, and the high proportion of youth in CD 1. However, he is aware that such entities cannot afford to compete with commercial office users and retailers who could pay higher rents to lease at this location. Borough President Adams believes that such space could be a community asset if rented at below-market rates to local arts and cultural groups and/or non-profit organizations.

Borough President Adams would support a binding commitment memorializing approximately one quarter of River Ring's non-residential floor area at below-market rents to provide space for non-profit and/or arts and cultural organizations, child care, as well as commercial maker and/or studio space. Furthermore, to the extent that the City Council seeks to secure space at below-market rents for such uses, it should obtain written commitments from River Street Partners, LLC in the form of an executed legally enforceable mechanism, such as a deed restriction or contract with a non-profit business service provider to actively solicit such entities based on reasonable lease terms, in consultation with CB 1 and local elected officials.

As represented, the River Ring development would include a 30,000 sq. ft. community center housed in the proposed 49-story building. The intended YMCA would be expected to contain a youth swimming center and serve the entire Greenpoint/Williamsburg community. As this much needed resource represents a valued neighborhood amenity, Borough President Adams seeks to secure what has been represented. He understands that it may not be possible to deliver such a community amenity at the time of residential occupancy given logistics that effect the ability of a use such as a YMCA to be fully operational.

However, he concurs with CB 1's request to verify that specific elements of a YMCA facility can be accommodated through space intended to be provided. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that design schematic drawings be developed before consideration of the requested land use actions.

To confirm that appropriate community facility use would be realized, Bulk Waiver Sections Z06-1, Z06-2 and C06-4, as part of special permit ULURP 220064 ZSK, should be further modified with a notation that restricts community facility floor area to Use Group (UG) 3A schools (restricted to child care centers), non-commercial art galleries, and/or UG 4A clubs, community centers, non-commercial recreation centers, philanthropic or non-profit institutions without sleeping accommodations. Additionally, at least one-quarter of the floor area set-aside for commercial office, community facility, and/or retail space, should

be reserved for occupancy by any combination of arts/cultural entities, child care, innovation and maker uses, and non-profit organizations — including recreational facilities.

Prior to considering the application, the City Council should obtain written commitments from River Street Partners LLC clarifying how community facility floor area would be leased at below-market rates, and with intent memorialize to recruit such entities, based on reasonable lease terms in consultation with CB 1 and local elected officials, through a legally enforceable mechanism, such as a deed restriction or contract with a non-profit business or service provider. Furthermore, that such space set aside, for intended occupancy for a YMCA, should be represented on design development drawings to confirm that such facility would serve both the Williamsburg and Greenpoint communities as well as 250 school children annually, with to-scale representation of all facility elements to ensure adequate provision of amenities.

Consideration of Eliminating Building Floors in Lieu of Deeper/More Affordable Housing

In its conditional approval, CB 1 requested that the developer provide more and/or deeper affordability at River Ring while also reducing the project volume by one third. In addition, some people testified that the project's excessive height would bring too much development to the immediate area. While the former CB 1 stipulation is more feasible, Borough President Adams believes it may be possible to modify the proposed density without compromising the represented project goals. However, a substantial reduction in density would diminish the opportunity to seek additional public benefit — particularly his recommendation for additional affordable housing floor area.

According to the River Ring application drawings, the upper floors of both towers are approximately 12,600 gross sq. ft.: 12,594 gross sq. ft. for the 20 highest floors of the shorter tower, and 12,620 gross sq. ft. for the topmost 36 floors of the taller tower. With mechanical deductions, the zoning floor area is likely to be approximately 12,000 sq. ft. Each floor represents a very modest amount of FAR (0.074). As the City Council would provide the last opportunity for public input in on desired outcomes for development at this site, it may find that additional consideration of the proposed affordability is warranted through any combination of additional and/or more deeply units, versus a reduction in overall height. Therefore, in addition to considering mandating deeper and/or increased affordable housing floor area, the City Council should consider reducing the number of floors in one or both towers in its review of the requested land use actions.

Advancing Resilient and Sustainable Energy and Stormwater Management Policies

It is Borough President Adams' policy to advocate for environmentally sustainable development that integrates blue/green/white roofs, solar panels, and/or wind turbines, as well as passive house construction. Such measures tend to increase energy efficiency and reduce a building's carbon footprint.

In the fall of 2019, the City Council passed Local Laws 92 and 94, which require newly constructed buildings as well as those undergoing renovation (with some exceptions) to incorporate a green roof and/or solar installation. The laws further stipulate 100 percent roof coverage for such systems and expand the City's highly reflective (white) roof mandate, which Borough President Adams believes developers should exceed by integrating blue roofs with green roof systems. Regarding solar panels, there are now options beyond traditional roof installation. Multiple companies are manufacturing solar cladding from tempered glass that resembles traditional building materials, with energy output approximating that of mass-market photovoltaic systems. Micro wind turbines can generate sustainable energy for taller buildings and developments near the waterfront. Finally, passive house construction achieves energy efficiency while promoting local construction and procurement.

Borough President Adams' letter to President Joseph R. Biden Jr., dated January 21, 2021 outlined policies to rebuild America as a more equitable and just society, including initiatives consistent with the Green New Deal. Specifically, Borough President Adams advocated investments in renewable energy and battery storage to move beyond reliance on natural gas and dirty "peaker plants" disproportionately sited in communities of color. He believes that grid-connected rooftop batteries should be a standard

consideration for commercial buildings. Between existing flat roofs upgrades and new developments, there should be sufficient demand to manufacture such units locally and create industrial jobs.

Borough President Adams believes it is appropriate for River Street Partners, LLC to engage the Mayor's Office of Sustainability, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and/or the New York Power Authority (NYPA) regarding government grants and programs that might offset costs associated with enhancing the resiliency and sustainability of this development. One such program, the City's Green Roof Tax Abatement (GRTA) provides a reduction of City property taxes by \$4.50 per sq. ft. of green roof space, up to \$100,000. The DEP Office of Green Infrastructure advises property owners and their design professionals through the GRTA application process. Borough President Adams encourages the applicant to contact his office for further coordination on this matter.

As part of his resiliency policy, Borough President Adams seeks to advance stormwater management best practices including permeable pavers and/or rain gardens that promote DEP's green infrastructure agenda. He believes that sidewalks with nominal landscaping and/or adjacent roadway surfaces could be transformed through the incorporation of rain gardens, which provide tangible environmental benefits through rainwater collection, improved air quality, and streetscape beautification. Tree plantings can be consolidated with rain gardens as part of a comprehensive green infrastructure strategy. Where it is not advisable to remove street trees, it's possible to integrate stormwater retention measures into existing tree pits, with additional plantings to increase infiltration and make the site more pleasant for its users. In addition, blue/green roofs, permeable pavers, and rain gardens (including street tree pit enhancements) would help divert stormwater from the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The required Builders Pavement Plan (BPP) for the proposed development provides an opportunity to install DEP rain gardens along the development site's North First, North Third, and River streets frontages. The ZR requirement to plant street trees provides shade on excessively hot days, helps combat the urban heat island effect, and provides other aesthetic, air quality, and enhanced stormwater retention benefits. It should be noted that a rain garden would require a maintenance commitment and attention from the landlord. Maintenance includes cleaning out debris that can clog the inlet/outlet and prevent water collection, regular inspection to prevent soil erosion, watering during dry and hot periods, and weeding to ensure proper water absorption.

Borough President Adams believes that River Street Partners, LLC should consult DEP, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) regarding the integration of rain gardens with street trees as part of the BPP. If there is interest in implementing an enhancement, it should be done through advance consultation with CB 1 and local elected officials.

Borough President Adams notes that waterfront development of such tower height would be expected to incorporate deeply-driven piles. Site work to such depth might reach a level where integration of a geo-thermal energy system could be economically feasible. Therefore, he believes that River Street Partners, LLC should try to accommodate CB 1's request to incorporate geothermal energy into the development. sustainability plan for River Ring. Borough President Adams believes that a project of such density and scale should strive to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. He also believes that the project's expansive extent of an open space system along a waterfront location provides an opportunity to capture sustained winds along the East River. The linear nature of the project site could provide multiple sites to incorporate wind turbines. Specifically, the narrow section of the development site along the existing NYPA "dirty peak" power plant, would allow wind turbines to be spaced along the shoreline.

Therefore, prior to considering the application, the City Council should obtain written commitments from River Street Partners, LLC to incorporate resiliency and sustainability measures, such as blue/green/white roof treatment, geo-thermal energy, grid-connected rooftop batteries, passive house construction, solar panels and/or façades, and/or wind turbines integrated into publicly-accessible waterfront access area

extending along the power plant with such locations depicted on drawings LSGD Site Plan Z01-1 and Waterfront Public Access Area (WPAA) Overall WPAA Site Plan L-100.00 and Furnishing Plan L-150.00.

Advancing Vision Zero Policies

Borough President Adams supports Vision Zero policies, including practices that extend sidewalks into the roadway to shorten pedestrian crossings in front of traffic lanes. These bulbouts or neckdowns, promote driver awareness of pedestrian crossings and encourage them to slow down. Curb extensions also provide additional sidewalk space for seniors and families especially near dangerous intersections. When these measures are implemented, all roadway users benefit from safer streets.

In 2015, Borough President Adams launched the Connecting Residents on Safer Streets (CROSS) Brooklyn initiative. In its first year, the program allocated \$1 million to build curb extensions at five dangerous intersections. When reviewing discretionary applications for new residential and mixed-use development Borough President Adams seeks opportunities to implement pedestrian safety measures.

The River Ring proposal would result in dense, high-rise towers at the intersections of North First and North Third streets with River Street. These frontages would be traversed by pedestrians headed to the newly constructed publicly accessible open space along the East River that would serve as a community amenity, as well as the activated ground-floor with lobbies for commercial office and community facility use and residences and retail space. It is therefore expected that the project's crossings would draw a high volume of pedestrians. Per his CROSS Brooklyn initiative, Borough President Adams believes that curb extensions should be built at the intersections of River Street with the northwest corner North First Street and southwest corner of North Third Street. These improvements would benefit the future residents of River Ring and visitors to its amenities.

Therefore, prior to considering the application, the City Council should obtain written commitments from River Street Partners, LLC to coordinate curb extensions with DEP, DOT, and NYC Parks. All parties should affirm that implementation would require advance consultation with CB 1 and local elected officials.

Provision of Adequate Bike Parking, Electric Vehicle Chargers, and Car-Share Opportunities in Response to the Requested Parking Reduction

Borough President Adams supports the establishment of Transit Zones in the ZR to enable affordable housing development without requirements to provide parking for affordable housing floor area. He also supports efforts to reduce parking obligations, though such waivers should be part of a well-considered plan that provides alternatives to car ownership, such as bicycle and car-share services. In addition, any parking reduction should promote electric vehicle car ownership.

Ensuring Optimal Amount of Enclosed Bicycle Parking

Borough President Adams believes that a significant reduction in off-street parking should be premised on a corresponding increase in bicycle parking requirements (per the ZR, one bicycle for every two units). To reduce parking of the market-rate units, developers should provide significantly more than the required number of bicycle spaces. Moreover, given the proposed 33 percent reduction in standard parking requirements, this development should be required to make improvements that promote bicycle use.

In this case, the applicant is seeking to reduce the ZR parking requirement from 315 to 210 parking spaces for the market-rate units. The requested parking reduction from 40 percent of the market rate units pursuant to ZR 74-533 to 26.7 percent, should be satisfied with the additional stipulation that in-building bike parking be provided at a rate of five spaces for every six units in lieu of the standard one space per two units.

Accommodating Car-Share Vehicles within the River Ring Garage

Parking capacity can also be addressed by facilitating urban car-share services. There are times when affordable access to automobiles can provide a quality-of-life enhancement, even for wealthier

households. Furthermore, research suggests that car-share achieves environmental benefits by reducing automobile use among car owners. Borough President Adams believes that providing access to car-share at River Ring would benefit future occupants, as well as nearby Williamsburg residents.

According to ZR Section 36-46(a)(1), a car-sharing entity is permitted to occupy up to five parking spaces, though no more than 20 percent of all spaces in group parking facilities. River Ring is expected to add more than 1,000 households to the area who would be less likely to own cars. A significant number of Williamsburg residents also lack access to automobiles. Borough President Adams believes that a limited number of the 210 spaces in the River Ring garage should be set aside for car-share vehicles through dialogue with car-sharing companies.

To stage rental vehicles within the garage, the developer would have to provide visible signage, per ZR Section 36-523, and state the total number of spaces, as well as the maximum number of car-sharing vehicles.

Encouraging Use of Electric Vehicles

Borough President Adams believes that as electric vehicles become increasingly accessible, more buyers will opt for this sustainable alternative to traditional automobiles. In 2021, new electric vehicle registrations in the United States nearly doubled, outstripping overall growth in the auto market. Encouraging ownership and use of electric vehicles at River Ring would align with the development's sustainability agenda and achieve tangible environmental benefits. However, as a key consideration for utilization of electric vehicles is availability of charging stations, he believes that adapters should be accessible to no less than 10 percent of all parking spaces.

Given the overwhelming expense of building underground parking in proximity to the East River, the approval of the requested reduction in parking would result in considerable cost savings for the project. Borough President Adams believes that the grant of such a waiver should be premised on providing additional public benefit as noted above, including the promotion of alternatives to driving though enhancing accommodation of bicycles, enticement of foregoing automobile ownership and promoting ownership of electric vehicles. Therefore, Borough President Adams believes that the requested parking reduction from 40 percent of the market rate units pursuant to ZR 74-533 should be satisfied with a parking provision of 26.7 percent, with the additional stipulation that in-building bike parking is provided at a rate of five spaces for every six units in lieu of the standard one space per two units, written commitments from River Street Partners, LLC to engage car-sharing companies in leasing multiple spaces within the development's garage, in consultation with CB 1 and local officials, as well as electric charging capacity for at least 10 percent of the provided parking spaces.

Ensuring an Optimal Amount of Bicycle Parking for the Publicly Accessible Open Space

As indicated in Waterfront Public Access Area (WPAA) drawing Furnishing Schedule L-151.00, eight, double capacity bike rack fixtures would be installed in the Supplement Waterfront Public Access Area (SPAA) and 16 of such fixtures would be placed in the combination of WPAA and the North Third Street terminus. This is in response to the ZR Section 62-62 (c) requirement to enable parking for 48 bicycles via bike racks. According to Furnishing Plan L-150.00, eight fixtures would be installed in proximity to the North Third Street southern right of way, near the shoreline.

The River Ring site is in proximity to a major bike route, the Brooklyn Greenway, and its publicly-accessible open space has the potential to serve as a stop-over, as well as a destination for those living directly upland but seeking to commute by bicycle. Borough President Adams believes that WAP requirements for the open space are deficient for such a represented public amenity. He believes that River Street Partners, LLC should greatly exceed the ZR requirement by providing many more bicycle parking fixtures. Based on a review of the proposed WAP, there appears to be an opportunity to include 39 extra bike fixtures. They could be added as follows: adding eight fixtures just west of the terminus of North Third Street, south of the right-of-way; another six along the south side of the North Third Street

right of way between the tables and chairs to the west of the corner retail space; 16 bike racks along the River Street right of way between North First and North Third streets, spaced between the retail stores and residential entry, and between the retail store and the prolongation of Metropolitan Avenue; three fixtures along North First Street between the corner retail and office lobby, and six more near Grand Ferry Park on the seaward side of the pathway to the south of the first group of benches.

Borough President Adams believes that River Street Partners, LLC should exceed the ZR 62-62 (c) requirement for bike racks as per the fixture indicated in Waterfront Public Access Area (WPAA) drawing Furnishing Details L-511.00, by providing 39 additional double-capacity bike parking fixtures depicted on waterfront public access drawings Overall WPAA Site Plan L-100.00, Furnishing Plan L-150.00, and reflected in Furnishing Schedule L-151.00.

Providing Quality Jobs

Borough President Adams is concerned that too many Brooklyn residents are currently unemployed or underemployed. It is his policy to promote economic development that expands employment opportunities. According to the Furman Center's "State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods in 2017," double-digit unemployment remains a pervasive reality in the borough, with more than half of community districts reporting poverty rates of 20 percent or higher. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated widespread job insecurity.

This employment crisis can be addressed by prioritizing local hiring and Brooklyn-based businesses, including qualified LBEs and MWBEs, a central component of Borough President Adams' economic agenda. This site provides opportunities for the developer to retain a Brooklyn-based contractor and subcontractor, especially those that are designated LBEs, consistent with Section 6-108.1 of the City's Administrative Code, and MWBEs that meet or exceed standards per Local Law 1 (no less than 20 percent participation) and coordinate oversight of such participation by an appropriate monitoring agency.

In addition, jobs in the building service sector have long been a path to middle-class living for immigrants and people of color. Building service positions have low barriers to entry and real career prospects. When compensated at prevailing wage standards, such jobs provide average wages double that of the retail sector. Additionally, building service opportunities are often filled through local hiring.

Borough President Adams believes it is appropriate to advocate for economic opportunities that provide sufficient income to alleviate rent burdens for low- and moderate-income families. He further believes that building service positions increase neighborhood employment. Borough President Adams strongly encourages developers to commit to local hiring for building service jobs, and to provide prevailing wages and full benefits to this workforce.

Therefore, prior to considering the application, the City Council should obtain written commitments from the applicant, River Street Partners, LLC to memorialize in its intended RFPs, retention of Brooklyn-based contractors and subcontractors, especially those designated LBEs consistent with Section 6-108.1 of the City's Administrative Code and MWBEs, to meet or exceed Local Law 1 standards (no less than 20 percent participation). Such commitments should also clarify the developer's intent to partner with local employment organizations to fill building service positions and confirm that these workers would be paid prevailing wages with full benefits.

Accommodating Rent-Burdened Households in Lieu of Strict Area Median Income Standards

Data shows that more than 80 percent of New York City households earning 50 percent of AMI or less are rent-burdened. The crisis is even worse among those making 30 percent of AMI or less, currently \$32,220 for a family of three. More than 50 percent of this population pays more than half of their income toward rent. Finally, nearly one third of New York City households earn less than \$35,000 and more than one-fifth — over two million people — earn less than \$25,000 annually. As the City's housing crisis grows worse, the burden falls most heavily on these low-income households, exacerbating racial disparities.

According to the CHPC, one in four households of color is severely rent-burdened, which is 11 percent more than Caucasian households.

A strict rent-to-income requirement of no more than 30 percent prevents many rent-burdened households, who are often paying the same or greater rent for an apartment from applying for new affordable housing. As noted in his East New York Community Plan ULURP recommendation, Borough President Adams believes it's time to stop excluding families paying too much for substandard accommodations from affordable housing lotteries. He seeks to qualify rent-burdened households for the lottery process, which would maximize their opportunities to secure affordable housing and expand the number of households eligible for affordable housing lotteries.

One way to address this disparity is by amending the ZR AMI qualifications to include households that would maintain or reduce their rent burden. For MIH lotteries, DCP needs to modify the ZR to allow exceptions to the 30 percent of income limit so that those who are rent-burdened and paying equal or greater rent than that of the lottery unit would be eligible to live in new and quality affordable housing. Borough President Adams believes that the CPC and/or the City Council call for modification of the ZR MIH section pertaining to special bulk regulations, to allow rent-burdened households to qualify for MIH affordable housing units.

Adequate Funding for Bushwick Inlet Park

Borough President Adams recognizes that CD 1 is significantly underserved by public open space, and that this issue has been a longstanding concern in the community. New developments that add residential density in Greenpoint-Williamsburg exacerbate demand for parkland, though opportunities to create new open space are limited. The completion of Bushwick Inlet Park has been a top objective for CD 1 since the 2005 rezoning opened the waterfront to high-rise residential construction. He therefore calls on the City to honor its commitments and include full funding for Bushwick Inlet Park in its 10-year capital plan to achieve a complete and operational park.

Ensuring Adequate Ferry Service

One way to relieve pressure on existing bus and subway infrastructure in Williamsburg is to induce Lower Manhattan and Midtown commuters to take the ferry. New York City's subsidized ferry system, which consists of multiple routes that run across and along the East River, has an extensive ridership base within a brief walk given the ongoing high-rise residential development along the Brooklyn/Queens waterfront.

Currently, NYC Ferry operates an East River route between Hunter's Point South and Wall Street that picks up passengers along several stops before alighting in Midtown or Lower Manhattan. While the proposed development would bring more than 1,000 new households to the Williamsburg waterfront, the vast extent of the Domino site has yet to be developed; 420 Kent has many apartments to be occupied; development is underway to the north of Bushwick Inlet, and anticipated south of Schaefer Landing. Borough President Adams believes, over time, ridership in this area would overwhelm the capacity of the East River route. Therefore, a next step for the evolution of the ferry system would be for EDC, or a successor agency, to consider running point to point service between the Northside Piers and Pier 11 and East 34th Street during peak AM and PM weekday hours.

Adequate Public Bus Transit

The waterfront section of Williamsburg is served by the B32 and Q59 buses, which stop on Kent and Wythe avenues between South Second and Third streets, and the B62 bus, which stops on Bedford Avenue between South First and Second streets. The Q59 provides a convenient connection to both the G and L trains. The MTA recently implemented the B32 route connecting the Williamsburg waterfront, Greenpoint, and Long Island City. The route operates between Marcy Avenue station and Long Island City stations served by the 7, E, G, and M subway trains, running along Kent Avenue (northbound) and Wythe Avenue (southbound). The B32 line has added capacity to the area and

has helped absorb the impacts of ongoing development on the Q59, as its southern segment mirrors the Q59 and B62 routes.

Borough President Adams believes that further improvements should be made to enhance local bus service. Specifically, the Q59, which is presently operating at 12-minute intervals, should be extended from Williamsburg Plaza to the southwest corner of Broadway and Marcy Avenue. Such a change would shift ridership to the east end of the station where there is more capacity to move between the street and the train platform. He believes the MTA should modify the Q59 to achieve best utilization of existing access to the Marcy Avenue platform.

The 2010 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for what was referred to as the New Domino development cited a need for 11 additional buses on the Q59 route during peak periods with three attributed to the New Domino development. As sites develop along Williamsburg's East River waterfront, it is expected that the MTA would modify its intervals of these bus routes. As the time comes, rather than providing more buses for the entire route, with buses significantly under capacity east of Lorimer Street, Borough President Adams believes that the MTA should also provide frequent Q59 shuttle service. With a shorter route, each additional bus added to the line could be utilized more efficiently and cost-effectively. The shuttle could have terminuses at Lorimer or Union streets (Metropolitan Avenue) and at Marcy Avenue (Broadway). The route could even be extended south to Division Avenue close to Schaefer Landing, the Domino, 420 Kent, and the pending site initially presented as Rose Plaza on the Water. He believes that the MTA should further modify the Q59 to add more service through such a shorter route with an extension to Division Avenue to serve southside waterfront developments along with the River Ring site.

Borough President Adams believes that it is also appropriate to supplement subway transit with express bus service providing direct access to Manhattan without requiring bus transfers to reach the Marcy Avenue and/or Lorimer Street stations. Borough President Adams believes that the B39 could provide more utility if the MTA extended the bus route to Lower or Midtown Manhattan from its Lower East Side terminus and along the Brooklyn waterfront as an extension from its Williamsburg Plaza terminus. As part of considering such a route, the MTA should work with DOT to pursue a dedicated Williamsburg Bridge bus lane for at minimum, peak commuting hours to achieve a commute option that would provide predictable service and have the ability to maximize the number of potential passengers served.

Completed and anticipated residential developments in CD 1 are expected to add a significant daytime and overnight population to the area. It is therefore reasonable to expect an increase in ridership such as what was disclosed starting with the 2010 FEIS, as updated in its Technical Memorandum. The MTA should closely monitor ongoing increases in ridership to determine when modifications become necessary, and continuously procure buses to maintain adequate capacity and frequency. Such monitoring should consider when it might be appropriate to implement more frequent shuttle service on the Q59 route and recommended route modifications, an elongated route for the B39 as a waterfront express bus, increased frequency for the B32 route between Long Island City and Williamsburg Plaza, and additional service on the B62 route between Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City. Borough President Adams believes that such MTA monitoring should occur in six-month intervals, to ensure that the agency is able to anticipate and meet transit demand associated commercial and residential occupancy of River Ring, and other in progress and pending developments in along the Greenpoint and Williamsburg waterfront. Such vigilance would ensure an adequate level of service and help control potential adverse impacts of increased ridership.

Finally, with the introduction of daytime office and residential occupancy, Borough President Adams believes it is appropriate for the MTA to coordinate the installation of bus shelters on Kent and Wythe avenues in proximity with DOT.

Adequate Subway Operation

Borough President Adams believes that the MTA must work to address increased residential growth that relies on the L train for transit access in a timely manner. Equipping the tracks with technology to run 22 trains per hour in one direction rather than the current 20 was an important step toward meeting increased demand for service. Communications-based train control (CBTC) upgrades to electric power and train storage facilities allow for expansion of such maximum capacity. However, it is critical that the agency procure more trains to meet designed capacity under the newest technology.

The MTA had previously intended to have enough train cars to run the L line at the full CBTC capacity of 22 trains per hour and was to order the additional subway cars which were supposed to be put into service by 2017. However, according to the DEIS, only 20 trains were operating during morning peak hours in 2017, based on that year's schedule. A 25-percent increase in G line service between 3:00 PM and 9:00 PM was also intended to alleviate persistent peak-hour overcrowding. The DEIS assumes that 22 trains would be in operation by the time River Ring would be occupied in 2027. It is imperative that the MTA redouble its efforts to maximize operational capacity as this and other residential developments come online in this decade.

With the recent rerouting of M line service that had taken over the former Manhattan V line, commuters to Midtown have benefitted from a one-seat ride. The MTA had implemented measures (disclosed in 2010) to mitigate anticipated impacts to the Marcy Avenue station's Manhattan-bound and Queens-bound secondary control areas for the J/M/Z subway lines. This involved replacing the existing High Entrance and Exit Turnstile (HEET) at both control areas with two low-turnstiles at each location to achieve increased capacity.

In terms of capacity, as more waterfront development becomes occupied, it is important to understand how the MTA may optimize the operational potential for these lines. The agency should continuously monitor service to determine if additional enhancements might be warranted in response to the ongoing population increase. The MTA should continue semi-annual full-line impact reviews to identify any need for increased frequency and/or additional train cars.

According to transportation advocates, the MTA has available rolling stock to extend trains operating on the G line. Coupled with infrequent service, the characteristically shorter G trains prompt passengers to utilize less than half the platform space when waiting for trains. At Metropolitan Avenue station, the closest G stop to the River Ring and pending Domino development, access to the platform is concentrated at its northern section, which results in riders crowding this area to board the train before it leaves. To remedy this condition, the MTA initially added one train per hour during the weekday hours of 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM. The MTA should also consider extending the existing trains by at least two cars in the future, and ultimately lengthen the G to eight cars to address passenger capacity and platform crowding — even if doing so would result in added maintenance and operations costs.

Borough President Adams believes that to improve subway service in this neighborhood, the MTA should monitor ridership demand associated with the residential and commercial occupancy of River Ring (and other ongoing and anticipated developments) in six-month intervals to determine when additional and/or more frequent trains are warranted on the G, L, and J/M/Z lines. The MTA should continue to procure enough train cars to operate L service at the full CBTC capacity of 22 trains per hour to achieve the maximum service capacity and add excess rolling stock to the J/M/Z and G lines.

Recommendation

Be it resolved that the Brooklyn borough president, pursuant to Sections 197-c, 199 and 201 of the New York City Charter, and of the New York City Charter and Section 5-430 et seq. of the New York City

Administrative Code recommends that the City Planning Commission (CPC) and City Council approve this application with the following conditions:

1. That for 210425 MMK, the mapping agreement for the discontinuation and closing of Metropolitan Avenue and North First Street include a condition that the sale of either the City-owned right of ways in the form of easements or tax lots, be one dollar, further conditioned on adequate demonstration that the remainder of the proceeds of fair market value have been deposited into a New York City Comptroller's Office Fiduciary Account for use by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) to advance the development of Bushwick Inlet Park
2. That the City Council obtain written commitments from River Street Partners LLC clarifying how it would:
 - a. For the additional FAR increment in excess of an R7A MIH district, provide affordable housing floor area at a rate that commits a combined extra percentage of 76,690 sq. ft. of affordable housing floor area, at an average 60 percent AMI, or modest decrease in the 60 percent AMI average rent collection
 - b. Memorialize the recommended additional 76,690 sq. ft. of permanent affordable housing floor area via a legally binding mechanism, such as the New York City Zoning Resolution (ZR) 74-533 (a) obligation to consult with the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)
 - a. Provide an affordable housing mix with at least 50 percent two- or three-bedroom units, and at least 75 percent one-bedroom and larger units, but for studios targeted to households not exceeding 40 percent AMI
 - b. Implement outreach efforts to seniors earning up to 40 percent AMI for single- and dual-person households, to maximize their participation in the affordable housing lottery
 - c. Utilize one or more local affordable housing non-profits to serve as the administering agent and have one or more such entities play a role in promoting lottery readiness
3. That Bulk Waiver Sections Z06-1, Z06-2 and C06-4, as part of special permit ULURP 220064 ZSK, be further modified to include a notation that restricts community facility floor area to Use Group 3A schools (restricted to child care centers), non-commercial art galleries, and/or UG 4A clubs, community centers, non-commercial recreation centers, philanthropic or non-profit institutions without sleeping accommodations. Restrict one-quarter of the commercial office and retail space for occupancy restricted to any combination of arts/cultural entities, child care, innovation and maker uses, and non-profit organizations – including recreational
4. That the City Council obtain written commitments from River Street Partners, LLC clarifying how community facility floor area would be at below-market lease terms, and with intent memorialize to recruit such entities, based on reasonable lease terms in consultation with Brooklyn Community Board 1 (CB 1) and local elected officials, through a legally enforceable mechanism, such as a deed restriction or contract with a non-profit business or service provider, and that space set-aside for recreation shall be inclusive of design development drawings to confirm that such facility would serve the stated purpose and promise of serving both the Williamsburg and Greenpoint communities as well as 250 school children annually, including proper representation to scale of facility elements including pool and locker rooms

5. That in addition to considering the mandating of deeper and/or increased affordable housing floor area, the City Council should consider reducing the number of floors in one or both towers in its determination of the requested land use actions in consultation with CB 1
6. That the City Council obtain written commitments from River Street Partners LLC clarifying how it would:
 - a. Install curb extensions at the northwest intersection of North First Street and River Street as well as the southwest corner of North Third and River streets as part of a Builders Pavement Plan (BPP) or as treated roadbed sidewalk extensions, with the understanding that New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) implementation would require advance consultation with Brooklyn Community Board 1 (CB 1) and local elected officials
 - b. Coordinate with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) to install DEP gardens as part of a BPP along North First, North Third, and River streets, in consultation with CB 1 and local elected officials
 - c. Integrate resiliency and sustainability measures, such as blue/green/white roof treatment, geo-thermal, grid-connected rooftop batteries, passive house construction, solar panels and/or façades, and/or wind turbines, including such wind-turbines being integrated into publicly-accessible waterfront access area extending along the power plant with such locations depicted on drawings LSGD Site Plan Z01-1 and Waterfront Public Access Area (WPAA) Overall WPAA Site Plan L-100.00 and Furnishing Plan L-150.00
 - d. That the requested parking reduction from 40 percent of the market rate units pursuant to ZR 74-533 (a) to satisfied by providing not less than 26.7 percent, provided that:
 - i. In lieu of in-building bike parking at a rate of one space per two units, such bike parking be provided at a rate of five spaces for every six units
 - ii. Engagement with car-sharing companies to lease multiple spaces within the development's parking facilities in consultation with CB 1 and local officials
 - iii. Electrical charging adapters be accessible to no less than 10 percent of all parking spaces, and not less than one car-share space for every 20 required parking spaces Bike Parking, including open space
 - e. Exceed the ZR 62-62 (c) requirement for bike rack fixtures, as per the fixture indicated in WPAA drawing Furnishing Details L-511.00, to accommodate 48 bicycles by providing 39 double-capacity bike parking fixtures, that should be depicted on waterfront public access drawings Overall WPAA Site Plan L-100.00, Furnishing Plan L-150.00, and be reflected in Furnishing Schedule L-151.00
 - f. Retain Brooklyn-based contractors and subcontractors, especially those designated local business enterprises (LBEs) consistent with Section 6-108.1 of the City's Administrative Code, and minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBES) to meet or exceed standards per Local Law 1 (no less than 20 percent participation), and coordinate the oversight of such participation by an appropriate monitoring agency

- g. Outreach to local workforce organizations to provide service jobs for local job seekers and that such building service workers be required to be paid prevailing wages with full benefits

Be it further resolved:

1. That the CPC and/or the City Council call for modification of the ZR MIH section with a requirement that permits households with rent-burdened status to qualify for MIH affordable housing lotteries (allow for exceptions to the 30 percent of income threshold for households paying the same or higher rent than what the housing lottery offers)
2. That the City of New York include full funding for Bushwick Inlet Park in its 10-year capital plan to achieve a complete and operational park
3. That the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC) study running more frequent East River limited stop service between East 34th and Pier 11 from Northside Piers
4. That the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) investigate the following bus enhancements
 - a. Extending the last stop of Q59 (at Williamsburg Plaza) to the southwest corner of Broadway and Marcy Street
 - b. Instituting a frequent bus (shuttle) service segment of the Q59 to serve the ongoing and envisioned waterfront developments between Division and Grand avenues, inclusive of evaluation of rerouting from Broadway to further south to Division Avenue, to be routed between the Marcy Avenue (J/M/Z) and Lorimer Street/Metropolitan Avenue (L/G) stations
 - c. Introducing express bus (could be a waterfront extension of the B39 route) to Midtown and Lower Manhattan, inclusive of collaboration with DOT to pursue a dedicated Williamsburg Bridge bus lane for at minimum, peak commuting hours
 - d. Monitoring Q59, B32, B39, and B62 service in intervals, not to exceed six months, to determine when additional bus service would be warranted based on ridership demand and then provide additional vehicles to increase the frequency of bus service as warranted to promote adequate service to these routes and implement the above referenced route modifications
 - e. Obtaining additional buses for maintaining adequate frequency and capacity as follows:
 1. To implement the described shuttle for the Q59 route
 2. The B39 waterfront express route
 3. The B62 route to or from Downtown Brooklyn and Long Island City
 - f. Coordinating with DOT for the installation of bus shelters on Kent and Wythe Avenues in proximity to the River Ring site
 - g. Undertaking semi-annual full line impact reviews to determine the projected need for increased frequency for L, J/M/Z and G line service and/or lengthening each G line train

- h. Adding additional cars to the G train to expand each train's capacity to eight cars from its current four cars per train
- i. Continuing MTA efforts to obtain additional cars to increase the number of trains along the L line to its designed community-based train control operating capacity of 22 trains per peak hour service in one direction

From: [Public Hearing Comments \(Do not reply\)](#)
To: [Amritha Mahesh \(DCP\)](#); [Evren Ulker-Kacar \(DCP-Consultant\)](#); [BrooklynComments_DL](#)
Subject: Comments re: C 220062 ZMK - River Ring
Date: Friday, October 8, 2021 2:50:57 PM

Re. Project: **C 220062 ZMK - River Ring**

- Application Number: **C 220062 ZMK**
- Project: **River Ring**
- Public Hearing Date: **10/20/2021**
- Borough: **Brooklyn**
- Community District: **1**

Submitted by:

Name: **Mike Cherepko**
Zip: **11211**

I represent:

- **Myself**

Details for "I Represent":

My Comments:

Vote: I am **in favor**

Have you previously submitted comments on this project? **No**
If yes, are you now submitting new information?

I have attended or will attend the City Planning Commission's Public hearing on this project:
No

Additional Comments:

I urge the City Planning Commission to approve the full River Ring project. The cuts that the community board conditioned its support on would jeopardize the other benefits River Ring offers. But more importantly, New York City needs all of these homes, even the market rate ones. However, the parking requirement should be eliminated. Perhaps the developer is going to build parking anyway, but that is no reason for the city to require that. If the rezoning allows 0 parking now, it will be easier to change later if there is too much parking.

From: [Public Hearing Comments \(Do not reply\)](#)
To: [Amritha Mahesh \(DCP\)](#); [Evren Ulker-Kacar \(DCP-Consultant\)](#); [BrooklynComments_DL](#)
Subject: Comments re: C 220062 ZMK - River Ring
Date: Thursday, October 7, 2021 2:56:18 PM

Re. Project: **C 220062 ZMK - River Ring**

- Application Number: **C 220062 ZMK**
- Project: **River Ring**
- Public Hearing Date: **10/20/2021**
- Borough: **Brooklyn**
- Community District: **1**

Submitted by:

Name: **Shaurav Datta**
Zip: **11201**

I represent:

- **Myself**

Details for “I Represent”:

My Comments:

Vote: I am **in favor**

Have you previously submitted comments on this project? **No**
If yes, are you now submitting new information? **No**

I have attended or will attend the City Planning Commission's Public hearing on this project:
No

Additional Comments:

Dear Commissioners, I'm testifying in support of the River Ring proposal as a constituent, a public servant and first-generation immigrant who's benefited from living in new-build, dense, mixed-income housing in Downtown Brooklyn for the last decade. The City Planning Commission already has the local roots and local knowledge to fully understand the affordability crisis facing Brooklyn and indeed the rest of New York City. However, in many rezoning applications located in rich Brooklyn neighborhoods in particular, we've hindered our ability to take even small steps towards solving this affordability crisis in the way we choose to cut the scale of new, modern housing. We've, admirably, asked for more affordability, but often in exchange for lower density and at the cost of more units and thus also the ability to house more families. These cuts are consequential...they're cuts to the dream of housing stability for so many rent-burdened New Yorkers living in sub-standard housing

poorly suited to survive climate change. We've all seen the impact of Ida on so many of our fellow New Yorkers. I thank Community Board 1 and Borough President Adams for hosting spirited discussions on River Ring. However, for project opponents to ask to cut down the number of homes realized by this project, based largely on subjective aesthetic concerns, will be a lost opportunity towards bringing modern, energy-efficient, climate-resilient, mixed-income & affordable homes that will add housing choice and security in a Brooklyn that is already priced out of reach for so many. River Ring should receive approval for an at least R8 level of zoning. Two Trees' efforts to create new public park spaces at Domino Park in this part of Brooklyn have been a runaway success. The benefits of a new, fully-connected public waterfront park space that River Ring offers are obvious and it would not be in the interest the community if any of these unique benefits were watered down as a result of a change in density to ostensibly protect incumbent homeowners' water views, or to serve their individual notions of contextual appropriateness. I hear the community's concerns on neighborhood infrastructure, but the project does appear to consider these in good faith, and while we need to push for better and more resilient infrastructure to welcome new New Yorkers in the future, we cannot use the comfortably housed to leverage that as an issue to potentially hold new homes hostage. I encourage the Commission to support this application while maximizing the number of new homes it will create.



**New York City Planning Commission
Hearing on River Ring
October 6, 2021
Adam Ganser, Executive Director**

My name is Adam Ganser, and I am the *Executive Director* of New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). I would like to thank the Planning Commission for the opportunity to submit written testimony in favor of the River Ring project proposed by Two Trees.

This project speaks to three priority policy issues facing the city: a dearth of public green space, a general lack of preparedness for climate change, and shortage of affordable housing. This project, a private development, ambitiously seeks to do its part to address these three important challenges.

Affordable Housing:

Too often, the priorities of open space and affordability are pitted against each other in private developments. Two Trees has demonstrated a commitment to both with this project prioritizing affordability for those New Yorkers most in need of affordable housing. The development proposal currently dedicates 25% of the total units to affordable housing, with 40% of those units targeted for very low-income New Yorkers making 40% of the area median income. While NY4P's focus is on open space, open space must have equitable access, and Two Trees initial proposal is a start in that direction.

Park Space:

According to our own research, North Brooklyn has one of lowest rates of open space per capita in the city, making the development of parks a critical priority. Even though there is no requirement for the developer to do so, Two Trees has committed to build an ambitious park that will make possible a string of waterfront open spaces from the Brooklyn Navy Yard to Newtown Creek – unthinkable just ten years ago. What's more, it will be fully public and paid for and maintained by private dollars, costing the city nothing.

Climate Resiliency:

The proposed park is not just a park; it is a forward-thinking climate resiliency model, with breakwaters to slow down wave action, reducing the impact of storm surges and protecting the neighborhood. The project sets an important precedent for future waterfront development in New York City. What's more, the park's resiliency features will allow the natural habitat of the East River at this site to be restored. This will promote and sustain oysters, fish, birds and other wildlife.

For over 100 years, [New Yorkers for Parks](http://www.ny4p.org) (NY4P) has built, protected, and promoted parks and open spaces in New York City. Today, NY4P is the citywide independent organization championing quality parks and open spaces for all New Yorkers in all neighborhoods. www.ny4p.org

From: [Public Hearing Comments \(Do not reply\)](#)
To: [Amritha Mahesh \(DCP\)](#); [Evren Ulker-Kacar \(DCP-Consultant\)](#); [BrooklynComments_DL](#)
Subject: Comments re: C 220062 ZMK - River Ring
Date: Friday, October 15, 2021 12:03:01 PM

Re. Project: **C 220062 ZMK - River Ring**

- Application Number: **C 220062 ZMK**
- Project: **River Ring**
- Public Hearing Date: **10/20/2021**
- Borough: **Brooklyn**
- Community District: **1**

Submitted by:

Name: **Robert Gorrill**
Zip: **11385**

I represent:

- **Myself**

Details for "I Represent":

My Comments:

Vote: I am **in favor**

Have you previously submitted comments on this project? **No**
If yes, are you now submitting new information?

I have attended or will attend the City Planning Commission's Public hearing on this project:
No

Additional Comments:

I Support River Ring -- With Community Benefits ----- The River Ring development proposed for Williamsburg's waterfront offer important opportunities to increase the housing supply in a high-demand neighborhood and provide substantial community benefits, particularly to Southside Williamsburg residents. I urge the CPC to approve this project and reject the demand from CB1 to reduce the size of the project by 1/3. I also urge CPC to reject a suggestion from Brooklyn BP Eric Adam's that a shorter height could be offered in lieu of fewer and/or deeper affordable housing units. The height should remain as was outlined in the original proposal. I also urge the CPC to heed demands from local Williamsburg organizations seeking community benefits at River Ring. A new YMCA and waterfront public park will offer significant improvements to local residents. But River Ring must also commit to providing living wage, permanent jobs Williamsburg residents, particularly on the Southside.

River Rong should also shift their affordable housing ratio to include more units affordable at 40% AMI and fewer at 60% AMI. 40% AMI is equivalent to the median income for Black and brown households in Williamsburg. These are the households most in need of affordable housing opportunities. Thank you for your time. Robert Gorrill

From: [Sara Avila \(DCP\)](#)
To: [Amritha Mahesh \(DCP\)](#); [Evren Ulker-Kacar \(DCP-Consultant\)](#); [Annabelle Meunier \(DCP\)](#)
Cc: [Hannah Marcus \(DCP\)](#); [Hannah Peters \(DCP\)](#); [Sok \(Soki\) Ng \(DCP\)](#)
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] written testimony in support of River Ring
Date: Wednesday, October 6, 2021 1:24:29 PM

See below, written testimony from Michael Kawochka.

Best,
Sara

From: Jeffrey Glovsky (DCP) <JGlovsky@planning.nyc.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 6, 2021 1:23 PM
To: Hannah Marcus (DCP) <HMARCUS@planning.nyc.gov>; Hannah Peters (DCP) <HPeters@planning.nyc.gov>; Sara Avila (DCP) <SAvila@planning.nyc.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] written testimony in support of River Ring

From: michael kawochka [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 6, 2021 1:18 PM
To: Jeffrey Glovsky (DCP) <JGlovsky@planning.nyc.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] written testimony in support of River Ring

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).

Good morning Commissioners. My name is Michael Kawochka and I'm a 4th generation Greenpointer. I volunteer on the Greenpoint YMCA board, the PS110 PTA, and the CB1 Land Use committee that deliberated this project.

Through various public hearings, it is increasingly clear that there is strong, diverse community support for the affordable housing included in this project, as well as the Park, the new Y and the job creation that will be generated. Project supporters outnumber opponents at each of our public hearings.

And I've found that the vast majority of opposition to River Ring is coming from immediate neighbors to the site, specifically condo buildings at Northside Piers, 184 Kent, 80 Metropolitan and 330 Wythe, where residents may experience negative impacts on their waterfront views.

Currently neighbors enjoy uninterrupted views over the site, which is vacant except for a few interim uses. The folks that insist the site remain zoned for manufacturing are being disingenuous, they would really just prefer that nothing gets developed there.

The truth is, this site on Williamsburg's Gold Coast will never remain vacant. It is too valuable as a potential residential site that includes hundreds of affordable apartments,

or even with its existing zoning, which can be used for big box retail, distribution and last mile delivery.

We all know Two Trees' proposal can be improved upon. That's what this process is for... so we can give our input and recommendations to maximize the community benefits from any development on the site. In my mind, the mix of affordable housing, park space and community facilities like the Y in Two Trees' proposal does just that.

I urge you to approve the proposal with workable conditions that ensure that site can actually be developed with the community benefits that are being proposed.

From: [Public Hearing Comments \(Do not reply\)](#)
To: [Amritha Mahesh \(DCP\)](#); [Evren Ulker-Kacar \(DCP-Consultant\)](#); [BrooklynComments_DL](#)
Subject: Comments re: C 220062 ZMK - River Ring
Date: Thursday, October 7, 2021 4:20:03 PM

Re. Project: **C 220062 ZMK - River Ring**

- Application Number: **C 220062 ZMK**
- Project: **River Ring**
- Public Hearing Date: **10/20/2021**
- Borough: **Brooklyn**
- Community District: **1**

Submitted by:

Name: **Dan Miller**
Zip: **11216**

I represent:

- **Myself**

Details for "I Represent":

My Comments:

Vote: I am **in favor**

Have you previously submitted comments on this project? **No**
If yes, are you now submitting new information?

I have attended or will attend the City Planning Commission's Public hearing on this project:
No

Additional Comments:

I support this project fully, and urge CPC to allow it to continue forward at its originally proposed size. New York City is in a dire housing shortage and needs as many new homes as we can get--especially in wealthy areas that are well-served by transit, such as the proposed River Ring site. This is an ideal space to build as much new housing as we can! I'm also very excited about the possibilities of the new park that's proposed as part of the development. The beach on the East River looks really cool!

From: [Public Hearing Comments \(Do not reply\)](#)
To: [Amritha Mahesh \(DCP\)](#); [Evren Ulker-Kacar \(DCP-Consultant\)](#); [BrooklynComments_DL](#)
Subject: Comments re: C 220062 ZMK - River Ring
Date: Monday, October 11, 2021 2:34:07 AM

Re. Project: **C 220062 ZMK - River Ring**

- Application Number: **C 220062 ZMK**
- Project: **River Ring**
- Public Hearing Date: **10/20/2021**
- Borough: **Brooklyn**
- Community District: **1**

Submitted by:

Name: **Sunny Ng**
Zip: **11211**

I represent:

- **Myself**

Details for "I Represent": **Resident of the community board**

My Comments:

Vote: I am **in favor**

Have you previously submitted comments on this project? **No**
If yes, are you now submitting new information?

I have attended or will attend the City Planning Commission's Public hearing on this project:
No

Additional Comments:

I'm writing in favor of the River Ring project without the conditions added by the Community Board. This project will not only beautify the Williamsburg waterfront and make it accessible to all, it will add much needed market-rate and affordable housing in a neighborhood that can certainly handle it. I disagree with CBI's recommendation to arbitrary cut the number of units with their dubious claims of infrastructure capacity. The one thing I would like to see changed would be to lower the number of parking spots being built to discourage the new residents to travel by car and to encourage them to use some of the many transit options available.



October 18, 2021

Via Email to 21DCP157k_DL@planning.nyc.gov

Stephanie Shellooe, AICP
Deputy Director
Environmental Assessment and Review Division
New York City Department of City Planning
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10271

**Re: Comments on River Ring Draft Environmental Impact Statement
CEQR No. 21DCP157K**

Dear Ms. Shellooe:

Riverkeeper, Inc. (“Riverkeeper”), submits the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (“DEIS”) for the proposed River Ring Project (the “Project”), CEQR No. 21DCP157K, published on August 16, 2021.¹

Riverkeeper is a member-supported watchdog organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Hudson River from source to sea and safeguarding drinking water supplies, through advocacy rooted in community partnerships, science and law.

River Street Partners LLC (the “Applicant”) proposes to develop two mixed-use towers, totalling 1.336 million gross square feet of development, situated in a floodplain along the East River. In addition, the Applicant proposes to reshape the shoreline of the East River and fill portions of the River with 6,319 square feet of landfill “to enhance the protective nature of the cove and resilient flood protection measures, as well as promote increased healthy ecology along the shoreline.”²

¹ Stephanie Shellooe, Dep. Dir., Env’tl Assessment and Rev. Div., Dep’t City Planning, Notice of Completion of Draft Environmental Impact Statement; River Ring (2021), *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/river-ring/noc-deis.pdf>.

² New York City Dep’t of City Planning, River Ring Draft Environmental Impact Statement, CEQR No. 21DCP157K, at 1-5 (2021) [hereinafter DEIS], *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/applicants/env-review/river-ring.page>.

We appreciate that the Applicant has met with Riverkeeper staff on multiple occasions to discuss the Project, and we acknowledge the potential community benefits it could provide, such as a new YMCA space, a “tidal classroom,” and human powered boating opportunities.

The following comments focus on the ecological and climate impacts of the project. First, hurricanes Sandy and Ida have raised questions about resilience along New York City’s shorelines in the face of coming sea level rise and storm surges. These issues must be settled by the City before moving forward to approve the filling in of tidal waters to construct breakwaters on a parcel-by-parcel basis. Second, if the Applicant is approved to create subtidal, tidal wetland, and freshwater wetland habitats, as a condition of its approval, it should be required to develop and implement maintenance plans to guarantee their long-term success. Last, as the Project is likely to exacerbate the combined sewer overflows in the immediate area, the impact of additional raw sewage and polluted stormwater discharges to the East River must be acknowledged and addressed in the environmental impact statement.

I. The New York City Council must determine how it intends to regulate and protect new development along our shorelines and in our floodplains prior to Project approval.

The proposed Project is located on the East River and within the 100-year floodplain.³ The Applicant has prepared a detailed plan intended to mitigate tidal inundation and storm surge for a small segment of New York City’s 520-mile coastline. The Applicant asserts that construction of “in water resiliency infrastructure [] will protect the shoreline and upland properties from storms, flooding and sea level rise.”⁴

To the extent that the on-shore aspect of the Project depends on in-water landfill to protect it from sea level rise and storm surge, we ask whether such a development is prudent in the first place. As we have seen after Hurricanes Sandy and Ida, even where structures survive flooding, the disruptions to residents can last for months and years. The plans to fill in the East River and reshape the shoreline are drastic measures, to say the least, and a sign of what is to come. Such planning cannot be left to shoreline developers on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

New York City currently has no citywide resilience plan for development along shorelines and in its floodplains. As we were shown during Hurricanes Sandy and Ida, construction of new buildings in areas subject to flooding puts people in harm’s way and subjects the city to billions of dollars worth of property and infrastructure damages. Where extreme weather events were previously expected once per century, they are now becoming routine.

The New York City Council and Mayor recently passed Intro. No. 1620-A, an action Riverkeeper and many others strongly applauded. The new law directs the Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability to devise a “citywide climate adaptation plan.” Among other things,

³ *Id.* at ES-34.

⁴ *Id.* at 1-9.

the plan will evaluate risks from tidal flooding, sea level rise, and extreme weather events. However, the first such report will not be available until September 30, 2022.

Even without a detailed report in hand, one can see the conundrum of approving massive new development within the floodplain while the sea level is rising. The Mayor's report following Hurricane Ida recognized this growing problem and recommended that the Council take action to immediately "[i]nclud[e] sea level rise in the building code," because current building codes "do not account for sea level rise or the expanding reach of the floodplain that will put New Yorkers and their property at risk in coming decades."⁵

The failure to grapple with these important issues leaves the city and its inhabitants vulnerable physically and financially. Natural Resources Defense Council Senior Attorney and New York City Environment Director Eric Goldstein recently raised a series of difficult questions during a joint City Council Committee hearing on resilience following Hurricane Ida. He asked:

- What is the city's future liability for knowingly allowing new development in [floodplain] areas?
- What's the financial commitment the City is making to address future flooding by allowing more development in [floodplain] areas?
- And what are the people moving into those [floodplain] areas going to be told about those risks?⁶

These issues have come to a head and must be settled immediately. It is time to rethink land use in New York City. Are new developments in New York's floodplain, such as the proposed Project, merely "future flood buyout" developments? Is the city prepared to consider the in-water aspects of development projects on a case-by-case basis, and approve what amounts to "spot resilience"? Many more such spot resilience applications are sure to inundate the Council, given the rush to construct luxury housing along our waterfronts, coupled with the guarantee that all the entire 520-mile New York City shoreline will see extensive flooding in the coming decades.

In the case of the proposed Project there are yet no plans to protect surrounding shoreline areas on the East River, though such plans surely will be necessary. It is yet to be seen how this plan will fit with those that are forthcoming.

The precedent should not be set to initiate a land reclamation free-for-all. Resiliency should not be driven by the needs of one property. Rather, the New York City Council must take action to set detailed guidelines for shoreline and tidal floodplain development for developers to follow.

⁵ New York City Extreme Weather Response Task Force, *The New Normal: Combatting Storm-Related Extreme Weather in New York City 59* (2021), available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/orr/pdf/publications/WeatherReport.pdf>.

⁶ Testimony of Eric Goldstein before the New York City Council Committees on Transportation, Environmental Protection, Resiliency and Waterfronts, at 6 (Sept. 14, 2021), on file with author.

II. The proposed tidal and freshwater wetlands are unlikely to succeed without maintenance plans.

New York City has lost more than 85% of its coastal wetlands and well over 90% of its freshwater marshes to development and other in-filling over the past century.⁷ Tidal and freshwater wetlands creation, even on a small scale, likely will benefit the estuary. If the Project does move forward, the long-term success of the created wetlands is crucial.

Created tidal and freshwater wetlands and buffers must be properly designed and managed to protect these important ecological and water quality resources. As proposed in the DEIS, however, the creation of tidal and freshwater wetlands and buffers, without a plan for long-term maintenance and climate adaptation, is inadequate to achieve the desired water quality and ecological functions. Following is a discussion of the deficiencies in the proposed creation of wetlands and buffers as set forth in the DEIS.

A. The description of the proposed tidal wetlands is inadequate to ensure sustainability of wetland functions, and a maintenance plan must be developed and secured by bond prior to project approval.

Without a maintenance plan in place prior to project approval, the proposed tidal wetland installation is likely to fail. The Applicant proposes to create 19,044 square feet of tidal wetlands in the form of salt marsh and tidal pools at the Project site in the East River. “About 19,044 SF of salt marsh and tide pools would be created along the cove between the beach and the boat ramp. About 4,650 SF of the salt marsh and tide pools would be covered by a metal grate boardwalk at MHW [mean high water] (4,657 SF at MHHW [Mean Higher High Water]). The tide pools and channels are located under the boardwalk to minimize the impact of shading on the salt marsh planted areas.”⁸

“Salt marshes will be planted with smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*), the principal vascular plant of salt marshes . . . In the high marsh between Mean High Water and Mean Higher High Water, salt meadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), black grass (*Juncus gerardii*), and spike grass (*Distichlis spicata*) will dominate.”⁹ What form of *Spartina* will be planted: seeds, containerized plugs, bare-root plugs, or another form? Studies have demonstrated that “active planting does not necessarily lead to successful establishment of marshes.” Seedling survival is sensitive to erosion and requires a long disturbance-free period for successful establishment of *Spartina*.¹⁰

With regards to oysters, will mesh wraps be utilized on the pier pilings? If so, material utilized in the creation of the mesh should not include any form of plastic (polypropylene). If wraps are used, going forward we suggest the use of sturdy natural twines for the netting such as hemp

⁷ New York City Mayor’s Off. of Long-Term Planning & Sustainability, New York City Wetlands Strategy 3 (2012), available at http://www.nyc.gov/html/planyc2030/downloads/pdf/nyc_wetlands_strategy.pdf.

⁸ DEIS, *supra* note 2, at App. E, Nat. Res., p. 13.

⁹ *Id.* at App. E, Nat. Res., p. 9.

¹⁰ Haobing Cao et al., *Effects of Sediment Disturbance Regimes on Spartina Seedling Establishment; Implications for Salt Marsh Creation and Restoration*, 63 *Limnology and Oceanography* 647-648 (2017) available at <https://aslopubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1002/lno.10657>.

(manila), cotton and/or wool to reduce microplastic pollution as the mesh degrades over time. The long-term ideal would be for oysters to regularly establish on permanent structures and build reefs on the wraps and textured surfaces, providing them a head start.

Will sand be deposited on the substrate? How will subsidence be prevented for oyster castles or gabions on soft sediments? It would be conceivable to install platforms beneath newly deployed oyster habitats. These specifics must be addressed in the environmental impact statement for informed review.

Wetlands are often created as compensatory mitigation for development projects that impact natural wetlands. Such artificial wetlands are often unsuccessful.

In theory, compensatory mitigation ensures no net loss of wetland functions. In practice, compensatory mitigation has been problematic. . . . [Many created wetlands] satisfy the performance standards (legal compliance), but the resulting wetland did not provide the desired functions (ecological or functional performance). Even if a compensatory mitigation project was initially ecologically functional, permittees rarely were required to have long-term stewardship plans and obligations.”¹¹

Creation of the proposed tidal salt marsh would present challenges in establishing and sustaining ecological functions equal to those of a natural salt marsh. The Applicant claims the Project “would result in a significant net benefit to the tidal wetland and adjacent areas by increasing the volume and footprint of tidal wetlands (and significantly increasing littoral and intertidal zones), and by creating and enhancing habitats that improve the overall ecological value of the tidal wetlands and adjacent areas at the site.”¹² However, the DEIS fails to acknowledge the potential such wetlands may ultimately fail.

[S]uccess of created or restored salt marshes varies, i.e. only few (re)created salt marshes become a fully functional salt marsh, and many state that it is almost impossible at all to create a salt-marsh equal to a natural one. . . . [One reason] is that it takes time before the sedimentary processes, soil formation, vegetation, and fauna become established and the interactions between these system components are in balance. Secondly, not all boundary conditions are always optimal in restored or created salt marshes, so that the area cannot develop the same as a natural salt marsh would. In case areas are not considered successful, this is often related to a lack of

¹¹ Royal C. Gardner et al., *Compensating for Wetland Losses under the Clean Water Act (Redux): Evaluating the Federal Compensatory Mitigation Regulation*, 38 Stetson L. Rev. 217 (2009), available at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Carol-Johnston/publication/228222154_Compensating_for_Wetland_Losses_Under_the_Clean_Water_Act_Redux_Evaluating_the_Federal_Compensatory_Mitigation_Regulation/links/02bfe51250d8b9a2a1000000/Compensating-for-Wetland-Losses-Under-the-Clean-Water-Act-Redux-Evaluating-the-Federal-Compensatory-Mitigation-Regulation.pdf (citations omitted).

¹² DEIS, *supra* note 2, at App. E p. 30.

salt-marsh functioning, whereas the structure may be meeting the target.

The stabilizing effect of vegetation on the soil is therefore expected to occur on timescales of months or years, and will little aid in the initial stabilizing of dredged material.

...

[Moreover,] a salt marsh naturally undergoes succession, and [] interim habitats are valuable. This means that management should not always aim at creating only the final habitats as quickly as possible.¹³

The US Army Corps of Engineers, too, has recognized “the difficulty of restoring or establishing the desired aquatic resource type and functions” for created wetlands. *See* 33 CFR § 32.3(f)(2).

Although the DEIS proposes planting native species in the tidal wetland, there is no discussion of long-term monitoring for successful establishment of those species. Due to the limited success of many created wetlands, the National Research Council recommends that “there should be effective legal and financial assurances for long-term site sustainability and monitoring.”¹⁴ A typical self-monitoring period is three to five years, but some wetland vegetation may not mature for many years afterward. Other disturbances occurring after monitoring periods may require repairs to ensure successful functioning of created wetlands.

The Columbia Climate School reports that coastal development coupled with sea level rise is threatening wetlands.¹⁵ Whereas the upland tributaries of New York City’s once rich estuary carried inorganic sediments to replenish coastal wetlands, the impervious surfaces created by development have starved the wetlands for sediment and weakened them. With sea levels rising, the marshes are unlikely to accrete enough sediments to survive. The cited study concludes that “[f]uture resilience depends upon active enrichment of mineral sediment in both borrow pits and marshes, ensuring the marshes outpace sea level rise, provide wildlife habitat, and retain polluted sediments beneath them.”¹⁶

The potential impacts of sea level rise on the success of the proposed tidal wetlands warrant a thorough review in the DEIS, pursuant to the climate change regulation promulgated in 2018.

¹³ Alma Vimala de Groot & Willem van Duin, *Best Practices for Creating New Salt Marshes in a Saline Estuarine Setting, a Literature Study*, EcoShape – Building with Nature at 21, 25, (2013) available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283418241_Best_practices_for_creating_new_salt_marshes_in_a_saline_estuarine_setting_a_literature_study#pf24 (citations omitted).

¹⁴ Joy Zedler et al, *Compensating for Wetland Losses under the Clean Water Act 7* (2001), available at <https://www.nap.edu/read/10134/chapter/1>.

¹⁵ Aline Reynolds, *Urbanization is Cutting Off Life Support to NYC’s Wetlands*, (Sept. 24, 2018), <https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2018/09/24/urbanization-starving-nyc-wetlands/>.

¹⁶ Dorothy M. Peteet, *Sediment Starvation Destroys New York City Marshes’ Resistance to Sea Level Rise*, 115 PNAS 10,281 (2018) [hereinafter National Research Council Report], available at <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/10134/compensating-for-wetland-losses-under-the-clean-water-act>.

See 6 NYCRR 618.9(b)(5)(iii)(i) (requiring analysis of “associated impacts due to the effects of climate change such as sea level rise and flooding”). How will climate change impact the wetlands, and how long could they be expected to last as designed, given the rising sea level? Will they be capable of “migrating” to higher elevations on their own? Has the Project accounted for the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation recommendation to add “approximately 6 inches in elevation throughout the site with the same slope [] above the target elevations to allow sufficient space for plant communities to transition under sea-level rise”?¹⁷ If and when the wetlands become endangered, what actions will be taken to protect and restore them?

Other studies show that nitrogen pollution from the treated outflow of city sewage treatment plants has a deleterious impact on marsh plants. Jamaica Bay, the reference site for the Project, is losing roughly 33 acres of tidal wetlands every year.¹⁸ Eutrophication is a leading cause of impairment of many freshwater and coastal marine ecosystems in the world. Habitat restoration and water quality improvement are reliant on one another. Attempting to create a sustainable wetland in a compromised habitat will always be extremely difficult, but especially so when considering this and other development's additional contribution to sewage effluent in the waterways and the impact of large volumes of combined sewer overflows and MS4 (municipal separate storm sewer system) discharges. The ecological impact from these outflows as well as the constant introduction of raw and treated sewage and various chemicals including endocrine disruptors throughout New York City's waters represent one of the most significant problems in the estuary that needs to be addressed on a larger scale if we are serious about restoring habitat and wildlife in the harbor and estuary. We recognize that one development project cannot wholly solve these problems, yet we believe useful measures can be taken to reduce this pollution now.

For the foregoing reasons and to enable informed review of the Project's benefits and potentially significant adverse impacts, especially those from climate change, the Applicant should be required to develop bonded, long-term monitoring and maintenance plans that include the removal of invasive species and replanting of native vegetation that fails to establish.

B. The description of the proposed freshwater wetlands is inadequate to ensure sustainability of wetland functions, and design criteria and a maintenance plan should be developed prior to project approval.

The Applicant proposes to create an indeterminate amount of freshwater wetlands upland of the river shoreline. According to the applicant “freshwater wetlands within the larger upland zones will manage stormwater and provide additional habitat value. . . . Freshwater wetlands within the larger upland zone will be planted with emergent and floodplain native species such as pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), blueflag iris (*Iris versicolor*), soft rush (*Juncus effuses*), and multiple sedges.”¹⁹

¹⁷ New York City Dep't of Parks & Recreation, Salt Marsh Restoration Guidelines 35 (2018), available at https://www.nycgovparks.org/pagefiles/132/NYCParks-SaltMarshRestorationDesignGuidelines-FINAL-20180925_5bbe25b575534.pdf.

¹⁸ Anthony DePalma *Jamaica Bay Loses Marshes at Faster Rate, Report Says*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 2, 2007), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/02/nyregion/02marsh.html>.

¹⁹ DEIS, *supra* note 2, at App. E, Draft River Street Existing and Proposed Habitat Evaluation, p. 8-9.

However, as with the proposed plantings for the created tidal salt marsh, the DEIS provides no long-term monitoring and maintenance plans to ensure that freshwater wetland vegetation and their functions will be reproduced and sustainable. Wetland functions are not easily created. Hydrological functions are one of the biggest influences of constructed wetlands and “the difficulty of restoring wetland hydrology increases as the degree of wetland degradation increases.”²⁰ Wetland vegetation also is important to the function of water quality, and hydrology affects the way in which seeds disperse and germinate. Many seeds cannot germinate in standing water and therefore flow is essential. Vegetation, in turn, influences flow rates and thus reciprocally affects hydrology. Water quality is a function that “can be mitigated but rarely duplicated”²¹ because hydrology and chemical composition are difficult to replicate.

The DEIS proposes no specific siting of the wetland pockets in upland areas. “Site selection for wetland conservation and mitigation should be conducted on a watershed scale in order to maintain wetland diversity, connectivity, and appropriate proportions of upland and wetland systems needed to enhance the long-term stability of the wetland.”²² However, the DEIS provides no information on specific site selection, design criteria (type of impermeable liners—clay, geotextile, etc.), or soils (native soils, hydric soils from donor wetlands, etc.).

Further, invasive plant species threaten wetland biodiversity. These species have high rates of seed production and germination, and consume much of the nutrients in wetlands soils and water. Many constructed freshwater wetlands are improperly maintained and become dominated by invasives, which reduce biodiversity and functional capability. More nutrient-rich wetland soils provide better filtering and water quality benefits. However, many constructed wetlands are depleted of nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium and magnesium. Without the correct organic content of hydric soils, wetlands will not function properly.

For the foregoing reasons and to enable informed review of the proposed Project, the Applicant should be required to develop a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan that includes the removal of invasive species and replanting of native vegetation that fails to establish. In addition, the Applicant should provide specific design criteria for proposed freshwater wetlands.

C. The description of the proposed tidal and freshwater wetland buffers is inadequate to ensure sustainability of wetland functions.

Vegetated riparian and wetland buffers provide numerous water quality and ecological functions. Buffers intercept stormwater from upland habitat before it reaches wetlands or aquatic habitat. Water quality benefits include trapping and removing nonpoint source pollutants, reducing thermal impacts (shade), nutrient uptake, providing infiltration, reducing erosion, and restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical and biological integrity of water resources. Buffers also

²⁰ National Research Council Report, *supra* note 16, at 28.

²¹ *Id.* at 29.

²² *Id.* at 59.

function to store water and reduce peak runoff velocities during storm events and provide habitat for flora and fauna and corridors for wildlife to move between larger sections of habitat.²³

As is the case with wetlands, invasive species also threaten the biodiversity and ecological functions of buffer zones. The DEIS proposes that the tidal wetland adjacent area (“TWAA” or “buffer”) “would remain as is, barren fill area interspersed with non-native and invasive plant species.”²⁴ The reason that invasive plant species have established in the TWAA is that invasive species are more tolerant of environmental stressors than are the native plant species. Unless those stressors are managed to be reduced or eliminated, invasives will continue to dominate native species composition, degrading natural habitat and water quality functions of the buffers and, ultimately, the wetlands themselves. A barren fill area dominated by invasive upland vegetation cannot be considered a high-functioning buffer sufficient to protect the tidal wetland.

Additionally, because the Applicant proposes that “freshwater wetlands within the larger upland zones will manage stormwater and provide additional habitat value,”²⁵ the stress on those wetlands from receiving contaminated stormwater runoff will be further compounded by degraded buffers unless the water quality functions of the buffers are incorporated in their design and maintained.

The Nature Conservancy recommends that project sponsors “monitor buffers during and after construction to ensure they are maintained throughout all phases of development, including identification and treatment of invasive plant species.”²⁶ For this reason, the applicant should propose remedial and monitoring plans to remove invasive species from the proposed tidal and freshwater wetland buffer areas and implement long-term protective measures to eliminate further encroachment of invasive plant species.

III. The combined sewer overflow impacts must be properly identified and characterized as a significant adverse environmental impact in the DEIS.

Like most heavily populated areas of NYC, and as identified in the DEIS, the neighborhood of Williamsburg is served by a combined wastewater system, in which polluted stormwater runoff from sidewalks, lots, and streets mixes with raw sewage from homes and businesses. Under dry conditions, that mixture is transferred by a series of conveyances to the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. However, during precipitation events, the sewer system is often overrun, resulting in combined sewer overflows, which discharge the untreated, polluted mixture directly to the East River. New York City Dep’t of Env’tl. Protection, Combined Sewer Overflows, <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dep/water/combined-sewer-overflows.page> (last accessed October 17, 2021).

²³ Richard A. Fischer, & J. Craig Fischenich, *Design Recommendations for Riparian Corridors and Vegetated Buffer Strips*, U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center at 2 (2000), available at <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA378426.pdf>.

²⁴ DEIS, *supra* note 2, at App E., Draft River Street Existing and Proposed Habitat Evaluation, p. 15.

²⁵ *Id.* at App E., Draft River Street Existing and Proposed Habitat Evaluation, p. 8.

²⁶ The Nature Conservancy, *Ecological Buffers* (2015), <https://www.nature.org/media/centralapps/recommended-shale-practices-ecological-buffers.pdf>.

It is unclear in the DEIS precisely which CSO outfall subcatchment basin the project would be connected to, though it seems closest to NC-008. In 2018, the outfall serving the area overflowed into the East River 40 times, discharging a total of 25 million gallons of raw sewage and polluted stormwater to the East River.²⁷ As little as 0.34 inches of rain can trigger such a discharge.²⁸

The Project would increase the sanitary sewage flow to NC-008 (or another similar outfall) and exacerbate its raw sewage overflow problem. Even if the total volume of the discharges would be roughly the same as the proposed construction under the “no action condition,” the sewage would be far more concentrated in the proposed Project scenario, with an additional 257,815 gallons per day of sanitary sewage. The EIS should accurately determine not just the total wastewater generation, but also the incremental sanitary and stormwater volumes and what appropriate mitigation measures, or combination of measures, are required to prevent or limit additional CSO-related pollutant discharges to the East River.

The Project would also move an existing sewer outfall from the end of Metropolitan Avenue one block northward to the end of North 3rd Street. What impact, if any, would this have on the use and enjoyment of Charlotte Beach in Marsha P. Johnson State Park (between North 7th and North 8th Streets), where recreators often come into contact with the water?

* * *

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. You can reach me at (914) 478-4501 or at mdulong@riverkeeper.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Dulong
Senior Attorney



William Wegner
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Cc:

Justin Branan, Chair, Committee on Resiliency and Waterfronts, New York City Council
James F. Gennaro, Chair, Committee on Environmental Protection, New York City Council
Stephen T. Levin, Member, Committee on Environmental Protection, New York City Council
Patrick Foster, DEC Region 2 Regional Director
Stephen Ryba, Regulatory Branch Chief, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Michael Bogin, Principal, Sive Paget & Riesel

²⁷ New York City Dep’t of Env’tl. Protection, 14 Wastewater REsource Recovery Facilities’ SPDES Permits Combined Sewer Overflows Best Management Practices Annual Report for the Period January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2018, at 346 (2019) *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dep/downloads/pdf/water/stormwater/spdes-bmp-cso-annual-report-2018.pdf>.

²⁸ New York Soil & Water Conservation District, Open Sewer Atlas, <https://openseweratlas.tumblr.com/> (last accessed Oct. 17, 2021).

1 MISTER SECRETARY: A public hearing and the matter
2 of applications for zoning map zoning texts and city
3 map amendments special permits and a landfill
4 concerning River Ring. Please note that a public
5 hearing is being held by the City Planning Commission
6 in conjunction with the above ULURP Hearings to
7 receive comments related to address the environmental
8 impact statement. This hearing is being held pursuant
9 to the State's Environmental Quality Review Act and
10 the City Environmental Quality Review.

11 CHAIR LAREMONT: So we will have an applicant team
12 presentation of 10 minutes with speakers comprised of
13 Elizabeth Lee David Lombino, Jed Walentas, Kai-Uwe
14 Bergmann, Bonnie Campbell, Lisa Switkin, and Abir
15 Sabet. Please proceed.

16 JED WALENTAS (TWO TREES): Good morning madam
17 chair, thank you for having us, we can start on the
18 next slide whoever's controlling the slides.

19 Okay, again, thank you, Madam chair, thank you,
20 Commissioners, for having us this morning. I'm Jed
21 Walentas, principle of Two Trees. Designing and
22 building Domino Park was by far the most impactful and
23 rewarding experience of me and my firm's professional

1 careers. Since it opened three and a half years ago
2 we've had more than 4 million visitors. It's amongst
3 the most diverse places in New York. We bought this
4 former Con Edison site that you're going to learn
5 about today only because it would provide us the
6 opportunity to build another world class park on the
7 east river. Next slide.

8 Over the past 25 years New York has seen a
9 dramatic resurgence of its waterfront neighborhoods.
10 We've been part of that work and many of our
11 colleagues have also done extraordinary work
12 throughout the city. But the water itself and our
13 engagement with it remains elusive. This project
14 intends to change that and create a new relationship
15 between new Yorkers and their rivers and waterways.
16 Next slide.

17 From both a social, but also environmental and
18 sustainability perspective, we want to learn from what
19 other great cities have done and create an opportunity
20 in New York for personal engagement with the river and
21 its ecology and to create a new model for a storm
22 resilient shoreline that protects neighborhoods and
23 communities.

1 We've assembled a world class team led by Bjarke
2 Ingels and his office and Lisa Switkin and her team
3 from Domino Park to bring something truly
4 extraordinary to Williamsburg waterfront. This project
5 has everything a community and a city could ask for:
6 ample affordable housing, great architecture, a
7 privately-funded and financed world class park, a
8 unique and transformative vision, a YMCA, and even a
9 developer who can deliver on their promises. With that
10 I'll turn it over to Bjarke, to tell you all about it.

11 BJARKE INGELS (BIG): Thank you, maybe go to the
12 next slide, so when we started this project Jed gave
13 us one challenge which was basically that he thought,
14 even though the Williamsburg waterfront had gotten
15 much more accessible, maybe we had politely stayed
16 away from the water and said, maybe we could even
17 engage with the water more actively than we've done so
18 far and, as you can see our site represents this kind
19 of final remaining gap in the sort of revitalized
20 waterfront, go to the next slide please.

21 And the site is basically three plots that
22 potentially can connect the Williamsburg parks to the
23 north to the Grand Ferry park and Domino to the south,

1 and you can see, the existing caissons in the water.
2 So we propose like four things to bridge the gap
3 between the parks, to extend metropolitan avenue, in
4 the form of a promenade that creates a loop into the
5 water. And in reverse to create a soft shoreline that
6 brings the water into the city and creates this new
7 waterfront park, next slide.

8 So you see from above the kind of the kind of
9 loop that invites the life of the city into the water,
10 the piers that create nature to connect to the
11 existing industrial Caissons that are left as
12 destinations out in the water, the sort of protected
13 waters behind the break waters where kayaks and,
14 eventually, maybe people can stick their toes into the
15 water and a creation of a series of intimate spaces,
16 if you go to the next."

17 When you look at the sort of the cross section,
18 you can see the kind of sandy shores, the soft tidal
19 marshes will create all kinds of new habitat for
20 different kinds of life, not just human life, and you
21 go to the next slide.

22 The beach - a way to get into the water, a series
23 of intimate spaces, like the sort of outdoor tidal

1 classroom that sort of break down the scale and the
2 intimacy of the of the urban waterfront next slide."

3 So as a typical sort of R-8 density development
4 would have these two very large podiums that would
5 occupy the entire footprint, sort of really, sort of
6 pushing the public space in this kind of narrow sliver
7 along the water, and also sort of massively block the
8 views of the of the neighbors. And what we propose
9 instead, next slide, is to basically cut the ground,
10 the footprint of the buildings in half to create these
11 two triangular podiums that funnel and open up
12 metropolitan avenue to become the entire waterfront
13 and then this kind of gentle transition from the high
14 rise to the podium creating a series of cascading
15 terraces. Also one of the towers is perpendicular to
16 the water, so we really maximize the opening towards
17 metropolitan and the and the hinterland to look out
18 towards the city, next slide.

19 So the entire podium is public-oriented programs,
20 including YMCA, and multiple levels also along the
21 power station, a series of community programs that
22 sort of animate what is today a fence, and then this
23 kind of blend from the tower to the podium that

1 creates a much more elegant and slender and sort of
2 organic silhouette, next.

3 So when you look along Long Island City and
4 Greenpoint and Williamsburg and downtown Brooklyn's
5 high rise skyline, you can see that that the scale and
6 I think, maybe also especially that the slenderness of
7 the towers fit beautifully into this kind of
8 continuity of the sort of undulating skyline, next.

9 And when you go closer you can see the bottom
10 five floors are public oriented programs we create
11 this kind of 20-story open ground floor where towards
12 the park the kind of colonnade actually invites public
13 space within the footprint of the building, and the
14 entire facade both towards river street and towards
15 the waterfront are operable either in the form of
16 garage doors or foldable doors. We have a YMCA
17 including a swimming pool, an Olympic pool where sort
18 of underserved kids can get a free swimming education
19 and a series of populated terraces overlooking the
20 park.

21 If you go to the next slide you can see that we
22 actually expand the River street sidewalk to 15 feet,
23 and instead of the kind of traditional street wall

1 podium and a kind of sudden setback, we have a gradual
2 setback that starts already at the street, and as you
3 move up the Tower if you go to the next."

4 On North third street looking towards the water,
5 you can see that the raised ground floor of 20 feet
6 height matches the kind of canopy of the neighboring
7 building and all along river street and north third,
8 you have the sort of openness and invitation, you have
9 the variability of the of the signs and the programs
10 of the ground floor that open up to the street,
11 creating a very lively, transparent, and inviting
12 streetscape, and the final slide.

13 And at Metropolitan you can see how by not having
14 the typical podium of five floors occupying the entire
15 ground floor, we create this kind of gateway from the
16 city towards the border that opens up and invites
17 people to engage with the river. Over to you Bonnie.

18 BONNIE CAMPBELL (TWO TREES): Thanks Bjarke, next
19 slide.

20 So, with the last couple minutes you know here's
21 the list of proposed actions that are part of our
22 ULURP application for this exciting project, and while
23 the project may seem unconventional, the good news is

1 that it really relies upon permits and actions that
2 are available in the existing zoning resolution. I'm
3 not going to go through each of these in detail. I'm
4 happy to answer-we have our technical team on the line
5 to answer any specific questions about any of these
6 during Q and A, next slide please.

7 While we still have a couple seconds left here, I
8 wanted to address some of the questions that we heard
9 from the Commission during the review sessions and
10 again if we don't get to all of these I'm happy to
11 take a deeper dive during Q and A."

12 You know, first and foremost we're thrilled to
13 have received a favorable resolution from the
14 Community board on September 14th with a set of
15 conditions, there they outlined about 13 conditions in
16 their letter. I'm happy to say that we can make
17 headway on the majority of them, and again I can go
18 through them point by point if the Commission wants
19 during Q and A. Regarding the open space and
20 maintenance, we envision here a model, just like
21 domino Park, where we will privately construct, fund,
22 and operate the public open space pursuant to a
23 maintenance operations agreement with the parks

1 department, so this is exactly what we're doing at
2 Domino park.

3 In terms of the CSO outfall, kind of the status
4 of our work with DEP, we've been engaged with them for
5 over a year we've had about six working sessions,
6 we've done a bunch of monitoring of the existing
7 regulator and CSO, we're in a design process with DEP,
8 we anticipate getting a permit in probably mid to late
9 2022 from - we've been working with the Bureau of
10 Water and Sewer Operations and the Bureau of
11 Wastewater Treatment in terms of stormwater on site.
12 All of the stormwater that's generated on this parcel
13 will be directed towards private outfalls and not into
14 the city CSO. In addition, we intend to pursue an
15 onsite wastewater treatment plant like we're doing at
16 Domino, happy to speak more about that. In terms of
17 site remediation, Con Ed did a cleanup with DEC to the
18 commercial use standard - I see we're running out of
19 time here so let's turn it over to questions.

20 CHAIR LAREMONT: Okay. Thank you bonnie um I will
21 ask the Commission to ask their questions, but I would
22 like to first ask you to go into more detail about
23 your response to the Community Board recommendations."

1 BONNIE CAMPBELL (TWO TREES): Great I'm still
2 unmuted, great. So yeah so I can kind of go through
3 point by point pretty quickly. The first condition was
4 that we lease up the affordable units at One South
5 First street. We've been in a process for quite a
6 while with HPD and I'm happy to say we have resolution
7 and the lottery is set to begin on those units within
8 probably approximately six weeks or so, so that one we
9 can definitely meet.

10 Second was, regarding the request to increase the
11 number of affordable units at river ring, this is
12 definitely something we're open to discussing. We
13 likely cannot get near the 50% affordable that was in
14 the resolution, but we've heard loud and clear that
15 263 units we are proposing, the community would like
16 more than that, so we're in discussions with the local
17 councilmember and local community housing groups to
18 see what we can do there. We are also open to the
19 discussion of more family size units and we can commit
20 to the minimum bedroom size that was requested by the
21 Community Board.

22 With regards to Bushwick Inlet Park, we are
23 community stakeholders there as well, and we intend to

1 be advocates and partners in pushing the City for
2 completion of that park and will be helpful in any way
3 that we can.

4 Regarding some of the climate goals and the New
5 York Climate Protection Act that was referenced in the
6 Community Board resolution, we absolutely share the
7 board's goals on that in that regard. We're committed
8 to making this project a real model for climate change
9 and we're going to strive for carbon neutrality here
10 in a way that we you know we haven't in you know past
11 projects, you know. We want to reduce all reliance on
12 nonrenewable resources and we are committed to kind of
13 vetting the feasibility of all green building
14 technologies that are out there, including looking at
15 geothermal and looking at all the existing
16 technologies as we advance the design. We are in
17 discussions with the carpenters union and we're
18 optimistic that on this project like our past
19 developments we will adhere to the safest and best
20 construction practices, as requested by the Community
21 Board.

22 Regarding the condition about the enforcement of
23 rental fees and rent increases, this development will

1 be subject to rent stabilization laws, so all fees and
2 increases in rents will be regulated and disclosed to
3 DHCR.

4 We are very much open to working with the
5 Department of sanitation and neighborhood stakeholders
6 to minimize the impacts of trash pickup as requested.
7 We take great pride in managing the upkeep of our
8 buildings and the open space around our buildings, as
9 is evident our existing domino park development.

10 And then finally, the request to share the plans
11 of the YMCA as they evolve, this is something we are
12 happy to do. We're working very closely with the Y to
13 make sure that this 50,000 square foot facility really
14 meets the purpose and promise of serving Greenpoint
15 and Williamsburg."

16 The one condition that we can't meet is to reduce
17 the overall project size by 33%, that scale of
18 reduction would really render the project not
19 financially feasible and it would impede our ability
20 to deliver on the other conditions that were
21 identified.

22 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you. Thank you for that
23 answer Bonnie okay Commissioner Douek.

1 COMM. DOUEK: Thank you Madam Chair. You've
2 touched on many of the questions that are in the
3 Borough Presidents report to through the Community
4 Boards recommendations. Are there any further comments
5 you can make as far as the BP's recommendations are
6 concerned? They are quite extensive, and some of them,
7 including the reduction in height and so forth, so any
8 comments you can make to those.

9 BONNIE CAMPBELL (TWO TREES): Dave I don't know if
10 you're on the call sorry this is Bonnie I have to say,
11 the BP, I don't know if they sent them last night or
12 this morning, I personally have not seen them yet."

13 DAVID KARNOVSKY (FRIED FRANK): We have not seen
14 them, we are glad to respond when we have.

15 COMM. DOUEK: Great, if you can put that in
16 writing that would be appreciated

17 BONNIE CAMPBELL (TWO TREES): Absolutely, thank
18 you.

19 CHAIR LAREMONT: And you, Vice Chair Knuckles,
20 sorry.

21 VICE-CHAIR KNUCKLES: Thank you. I guess, this
22 question is for obviously Jared or Bonnie, could you

1 talk in greater detail about the affordability levels
2 and under MIH, what AMI's are you contemplating? How
3 low with the AMI's go in terms of the affordability
4 levels?

5 BONNIE CAMPBELL (TWO TREES): Sure, so right now
6 we're anticipating pursuing option one under the
7 Mandatory Inclusionary program which would provide 25%
8 of the overall units as designated affordable
9 permanently obviously and, within that about a little
10 less than half of them would be at 40% of AMI or
11 below. So we're looking at something around 105 units
12 at 40% of AMI and below and then the balance will be a
13 mix, you know between 40 and up to 130, but the
14 average of all of the units cannot exceed 60% of AMI.

15 JED WALENTAS (TWO TREES): And Mr Knuckles, just
16 to elaborate, you know we've spent a lot of time in
17 this community now having built, you know we started
18 engaging with local folks here, you know 8, 9, 10
19 years ago prior to our Domino development. We have
20 deep roots here now, we didn't when we began."

21 It's very clear to us, wearing all of our
22 different hats, that there's nobody in this community
23 that thinks that the units at 125 or 130 percent of

1 AMII are what folks are looking for. So, both in terms
2 of the existing programs that are on the books and
3 then also our you know negotiated or philanthropic
4 additions, as we go through the combination of this
5 process between now and the end of the year will be
6 both to increase the number of the units, but also
7 perhaps too deep in the affordability, and we've got
8 to find a balance that works with the community and
9 still enables us to build the project as Bonnie said
10 and you know, we are in addition to the affordable
11 housing, we are privately financing a park that will
12 probably be upwards of 100 million dollars and then
13 continuing to maintain that. So I do hope that
14 everyone looks at the whole basket of goodies here but
15 it's very clear to us that affordable housing is the
16 number one issue we have to deal with. We're committed
17 to do that as Bonnie said and we're also very aware
18 that the depth of affordability is a prerequisite
19 here, where we have no intention of providing units at
20 125 and saying look what we did. I hope that touches
21 on what you're getting at.

22 VICE-CHAIR KNUCKLES: Well, thank you and speaking
23 of the parks and what looks to be a beach, since we
24 know New Yorkers will not stop with their toes in

1 terms of access to the water, what measures, and this
2 is the East river we're talking about at the end of
3 the day, so what measures are you going to take to
4 make this portion of the East River fit for human
5 habitation?

6 BONNIE CAMPBELL (TWO TREES): Yeah so thank you
7 for that question, and I want to applaud DCP staff,
8 Brooklyn office and Central office, for working with
9 us, we brought DOH to the table and DEP to the table
10 to address the specific issue. It won't be, first of
11 all, it's not a swimming beach, because the East
12 river, both from a water quality standpoint, it's
13 getting there, but it's not there, and also from a
14 time standpoint, what's nice is that the wave breaks
15 that are part of this infrastructure does make for
16 calm water, so the dangers of tides are less of an
17 issue with this design, but that's obviously you know.
18 The beach is not swimmable. So between a combination
19 of DOH signage, staffing, and you know what exactly
20 what our peers, are doing in Brooklyn Bridge Park and
21 other waterfront access areas along the river those
22 measures will be in place. It's also important to note
23 that, because of scour and wash out, it's not going to
24 be like a fine Caribbean sand beach, it's going to be

1 much more pebbly and rip-rap. There's actually a
2 pretty strong rip-rap edge that's kind of under the
3 main high-water line, so you can't actually walk into
4 the water. There's too much of a kind of hard gravel
5 rip-rap that makes it impenetrable from a kind of
6 walking standpoint, but all of those measures together
7 will prohibit people from actually getting in the
8 water, at this juncture.

9 VICE-CHAIR KNUCKLES: Well, somebody will try. You
10 have those disincentives anyway, thank you.

11 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you. Commissioner Burney.

12 COMM. BURNEY: Thank you Chair, thank you for the
13 presentation, I must say I certainly commend the
14 stated goals that Jed and Bjarke outlined. I think I
15 have four sort of follow up questions on which we
16 might get some more information. The first has to do
17 with the FAR and I understand we have this other
18 bizarre alchemy of using the River to generate more
19 bulk, but I wonder whether R8 is really the right
20 number and you did say the Community Board approved,
21 and you commented that they asked for 33% reduction
22 which you say is not viable, but my question would be
23 to meet that Community Board condition, what sort of

1 reduction would be possible and would you contemplate?
2 That's the first question.

3 Second question has to do with the CSO and I see
4 that you're relocating the existing CSO, but obviously
5 you're also adding to the burden of treatment and I
6 understand you're doing some on-site treatment or
7 attention so I'd like to know a little bit more about
8 what those numbers look like, what that calculation
9 looks like, and to what extent can we minimize any
10 additional impact or even mitigate the CSO that's
11 there now.

12 The third has to do with the park and you know I
13 certainly don't doubt that Walentas' commitment to the
14 neighborhood and they've long history of that but one
15 wonders whether, in the future, under the agreement
16 with the City, whether there might not be an
17 opportunity at some point in the future to actually
18 privatize this park or even if not privatize it, then,
19 at least exclude people and activities that might be
20 allowed under a normal Parks Department management. So
21 that's my concern about the sort of nature of the
22 agreement with the Parks Department.

1 And finally I'd like to know a little bit more
2 about the ground floor uses I don't know if there are
3 ground floor plans available but I understand the Y is
4 actually on an upper level, so it would be interesting
5 to know, just in terms of street activation, what's
6 the, what are the ground floor uses of the two
7 buildings. So that's my full questions, thank you."

8 JED WALENTAS: I will, I'll take a stab at all of
9 them and then let people fill in where I've missed
10 out. In terms of the FAR, there's no FAR derived from
11 either the water or any of the public streets in the
12 development, and the FAR that we're asking for here is
13 actually less than what will get built at Domino and
14 it's less than everything, well not everything. It's
15 less than the waterfront projects that were approved
16 as part of the Greenpoint-Williamsburg rezoning that
17 populate all the northern buildings along the water
18 immediately to the north of us. So, from a policy
19 perspective, I think that you'll find that we're doing
20 nothing weird in terms of playing games with the water
21 or the streets, so the FAR is all generated from
22 standard - your rules as they've been applied over the
23 years for decades now. We're not playing any tricks or
24 doing any gimmicks there and I think, from a policy

1 standpoint, you'll find and should be pleased that the
2 overall FAR of the project is less than all of its
3 surrounding conditions, certainly when you go North
4 and South. And, just to be super clear, given the
5 demands on affordable, and given the infrastructure
6 investments that we're making in the park in the
7 public space, we are not prepared to take any FAR hit
8 on the project whatsoever, I think the heights of the
9 building could come down a bit if people think that
10 that's important in material and something they want
11 to trade on. To me, that would be a weird decision, to
12 take economics out of the project for that, but that's
13 a conversation for later. So that's the FAR.

14 The sewer question. We are currently about to
15 start construction at Domino on a privatized sewage
16 treatment plant that will take all of our sewer impact
17 off the public system, and I'm not sure it made it
18 into our presentation, but it's certainly in the
19 written materials, and we intend to do the same thing
20 at the River ring project. So we are relocating the
21 City sewer, the two conversations about the sewer
22 really you know completely separate. We're going to
23 relocate the existing outfall to improve the water
24 quality in the protected part of the river that Bonnie

1 and Bjarke have spoken about. So, to the extent people
2 get splashed on and kayaks or do stick their foot in
3 the water, the water quality, there is far improved,
4 however, our project, as we conceive of it does not
5 contribute anything to the city sewer system, one of
6 the things that we think we're pioneering and creating
7 a bit of a showpiece for here is not just a
8 sustainable edge and those sorts of things, but how to
9 get the project completely off the grid, and that
10 includes privatized sewage treatment, if you will.

11 The park question, I have to tell you, is a
12 little baffling to me. I don't know how much time you
13 spent at Domino park, or how much you know about what
14 we've done there. I think it's as good a park as
15 exists of its size anywhere in the city. I think if
16 you inventory the hundred people and talk to them that
17 were visitors at the park all hundred would be
18 completely confounded that it's privately owned and
19 privately maintained. When we went through this eight
20 years ago with this Commission and with the Council
21 and with Mayor de Blasio, his office, there's a whole
22 set of agreements and requirements that we have to
23 live with to ensure that it acts, feels, and looks
24 like a public park. I think we've not just lived up to

1 that but exceeded it, and I'd like to take this moment
2 to point out that it was negotiated with this
3 Commission and with City Hall, at that time was we had
4 to build that part pari-passu with our developments,
5 if we had only done that you would only have 20% of
6 that park would be built in front of our northernmost
7 building, which is the only waterfront building that's
8 built. You know, again, we spent upwards of nine
9 figures to build a public park, built the whole park
10 up front for the Community to enjoy. So I would really
11 hope at this juncture that any concerns about our
12 building or ongoing operations or maintenance of the
13 park or community engagements with the park and the
14 local community and the folks in the community that
15 care about the park and care about what programming
16 takes place there have been answered, you know, to the
17 utmost that they possibly could. We have a gentleman
18 that works for us named Michael Amperello, who runs
19 this park with an amazing and capable staff and he
20 gets an unlimited number of compliments about how both
21 the programming, the operation and maintenance exceed
22 any of the publicly run parks, certainly in our
23 neighborhood, and I hope that answers that question.

1 The fourth question was about ground floor retail
2 space and the Y, in particular, perhaps. I know i'd
3 like to point out, Bjarke spoke a bunch, but I think
4 it's really important that the Commission really,
5 really understand this, because the buildings
6 certainly look big in the in the renderings and
7 they're very tall. The footprints of the buildings are
8 tiny, and the footprints of the buildings are tiny
9 because we intentionally wanted to make as much space
10 as possible on a very limited site available to the
11 public and to make the park feel as transcendent
12 through the project as possible. There are pluses and
13 minuses with any trade off that you make, or at least
14 with most of them that we make in life. One of the
15 negatives, certainly from an economic standpoint for
16 us and I'm not here to complain about that at all, and
17 maybe from a social standpoint, is you have very,
18 very, very little ground floor space left in the
19 project by the time you have a functional residential
20 lobby in each building. There's parking requirements,
21 we have one parking entrance, the YMCA obviously will
22 have, while we're not going to put its basketball
23 court or swimming pool at the ground floor, It'll
24 obviously have a healthy lobby that works for its

1 needs, and in today's world, you need lots of room for
2 packages and you still need mail and then and all the
3 handicap access and all those things. There's very
4 little retail space left, we have a little bit shown
5 on the corners of the building, and in particular
6 along river street, and then, as I think Bjarke spoke,
7 the diagonal corners, if you will, have really been
8 both designed architecturally, and again I'd like to
9 echo what Bonnie said, you know. While it's at times
10 privately frustrating to us, I think the engagement
11 with City Hall staff and Winston and his team have
12 made this project, you know, much better over the
13 three years we've been working on it with them, in
14 lots and lots of ways, but one way I'd like to
15 specifically point out, is how public the ground floor
16 along these diagonals feels. That space is really part
17 of the park and it will be programmed as such. Retail
18 rents are not going to drive the economics of this
19 project, the residential market rate residents will
20 pay for everything else. There's very little retail
21 left, as I said, and those spaces will be programmed
22 to really become you know, an indoor part of the park,
23 if you will, and again I would hope that our track
24 record on the programming of neighborhood retail, in

1 and around Domino but also going back to our work in
2 Dumbo and our continued work in Dumbo, would
3 underscore the reality of our commitment to do this
4 kind of work. So I hope that touched on everything up
5 folks can add whatever they want.

6 COMM. BURNEY: Yeah good, very comprehensive
7 answer, thank you.

8 LAURA CHENG (TWO TREES): I would just make one
9 quick note, this is Laura Cheng speaking from Two
10 Trees. There is a ground floor plan included in the
11 appendix to this presentation, so I don't know that we
12 necessarily need to pull it up here, but it is
13 included in the in the presentation that we can refer
14 to as needed."

15 COMM. BURNEY: Noted, thank you. Thank you again,
16 thank you very much.

17 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you, Commissioner Levin.

18 COMM. LEVIN: Yes, thank you all, this is, you
19 know, not surprisingly, coming from Two Trees, just a
20 very exciting, phenomenal project with, you know, lots
21 of attention to the kind of details that the public
22 has come to expect from Two Trees. It's great that

1 you're tackling the connection with the waterfront,
2 that you're taking measures to address climate change,
3 to look at all available sustainable futures, you all
4 really are the sort of in the vanguard of this kind of
5 work, and I hope it demonstrates to others what can be
6 done, although not always as extravagantly and
7 exuberantly as you propose to do here, but that's what
8 it takes to drag other people along with you. We heard
9 yesterday at the review session that DCP is still
10 concerned about the sheer rise along river street, and
11 about wind conditions, as I understood it at the
12 Metropolitan avenue entrance, and that they're
13 continuing to work with you. Since this is the
14 Commission's only chance to talk to you all about
15 these issues, I wonder if there's anything you'd like
16 to say to us on those points at this time.

17 BJARKE INGELS (BIG): Maybe, yeah maybe I can
18 start. I think what we've tried to do, and I think
19 very often, urban design guidelines and master
20 planning guidelines end up dictating certain solutions
21 in order to avoid something that is much, much worse,
22 and I think what we've tried to do here is to maintain
23 the idea that comes with the urban podium to have an
24 entirely public-oriented ground floor on all levels on

1 the street sides on the side streets and also on the
2 park. To create a very generous ground floor that is
3 open and transparent and inviting with the colonnade
4 adjacent to the park to actually break down wind and
5 also the kind of sheerness that there is actually -
6 the facade is not just a surface and it's not a closed
7 surface. It's actually this kind of colonnade where
8 you can move in and there's a part of the public space
9 that is under the shade and shelter of the of the
10 floor and behind the columns so that it creates a more
11 sort of intimate broken down public realm where you
12 can imagine, little pockets or plans to to allow for
13 outdoor or outdoor seating and various activities and
14 then, of course, we have this kind of gradual step
15 back, well, not only do we, towards river street,
16 actually expand the sidewalk again by pulling the
17 facade back and creating this kind of shade and kind
18 of frame colonnade also but in the detailing, in the
19 transparency, in the operability, that you actually
20 create a kind of human scale and variation that is
21 going to be very, very different from a kind of
22 classic flat sheer wall. So, so, I think in all
23 aspects we may not follow the letter of the guidelines
24 to the T, but we do I think exceed the aspirations of

1 the guidelines in terms of creating broken-down
2 scales, create invitation and an openness and I think,
3 maybe also on this like an agenda spoke to it, and I
4 have to say I definitely drank the Kool aid myself
5 because I both live and work in Dumbo in a Two Trees
6 building, so I definitely signed up for this, but I
7 can testify, because we work on these kind of
8 developer-led urban regeneration projects in different
9 cities and I think of course, Two Trees are good at
10 what they do and that's why they keep doing it. But an
11 uncompromising commitment to creating a more lively
12 more exciting more resilient and more sustainable
13 public realm and waterfront of Brooklyn has been the
14 guidelines and I think sometimes at the expense of the
15 typical exercise, which is to pump up the project as
16 much as you can. We have actually reduced the ground
17 floor to half of what we could, and that of course has
18 an economic consequence, but it also has an
19 experiential benefit that I think the DCP can also
20 appreciate.

21 JED WALENTAS (TWO TREES): And Anna, If I could
22 just add, how are you, it's nice to see you. Certainly
23 from a wind standpoint, and lots of the work that we
24 do we, you know, we run around construction, we're

1 involved in these projects, all the way through, and
2 then own them long term. Wind is something, and again
3 we've worked with the DCP staff and Bjarke and his
4 staff. Wind is something you can model. And at the
5 same time, the models are just models. So while we're,
6 at the same time, committed to work with the staff
7 through the completion of this technical process, I
8 also just want to be really clear. You know, our
9 adjustments with Lisa and her team and Domino Park are
10 ongoing, every year we meet with them every fall and
11 learn the lessons of the summer, sometimes there's
12 some wind issues, sometimes they're shade issues,
13 these things are ongoing. Certainly in our lives and
14 our professional careers, with all of our projects,
15 you know, forever. And we're constantly making
16 adjustments and learning, and so I think it's a two-
17 part answer. One is to do the best we can now through
18 this process, with the best information we have, but
19 the models are also only models and you certainly have
20 my word and commitment as we start to build the
21 buildings and understand how the trees get planted and
22 all kinds of nuances they won't pick up in the models,
23 that this is something we continually work towards and
24 improve, you know, day in, day out, year in, year out

1 as the project matures, as we learn more and get more
2 information as well.

3 LAURA CHENG (TWO TREES): I would add just one
4 more quick note is that, to follow up on the question
5 of the concerns from the Brooklyn office of DCP about
6 the sheer wall at River Street. I think we have
7 explored, a lot of different ideas with DCP about how
8 we might address those concerns. I think, quite
9 honestly, they are all, I think some of them are quite
10 promising. So we've talked about what happens if we
11 look at a gradient of the material as it moves from
12 the ground floor, the second floor, the third floor
13 establishing kind of the sensibility of the podium. I
14 think the goal is, as Bjarke described it, how do you
15 kind of establish what the podium is meant to do
16 without literally making a setback, which is kind of
17 counter to the massing and ideas of the project as a
18 whole. So we've looked at what happens with material,
19 what happens if the color of the building gradually
20 changes. I think all of these ideas, and you know, see
21 what the staff feels, have some promise to them, I
22 think that a lot of them are sort of for a later stage
23 in the evolution of the design of the building, and so
24 we've been quite open to talking with DCP about how we

1 might establish as part of the ULURP what some of
2 those approaches might be, but I think quite honestly,
3 that is a building design level of work, and not sort
4 of the stage of development that the project is in
5 now, but we do have some ideas, and I think a lot of
6 them have promise.

7 COMM. LEVIN: Thank you for that background.

8 CHAIR LAREMONT: Commissioner Rampershad.

9 COMM. RAMPERSHAD: Thank you. A lot of the
10 questions I had were already asked, I just have just
11 two general questions with regards to the north first
12 street. Was FDNY consulted, and do you need a
13 turnaround at the end of north first street, and will
14 there be protected parking along the street, because I
15 noticed, you have the parking ramp or parking access
16 there and how many vehicles will be parked in the
17 Building B?

18 BONNIE CAMPBELL (TWO TREES): Sure, I can take a
19 stab, and then I don't know if someone from the
20 technical team wants to, but we, yes, we did work with
21 FDNY. We met them on site, we reviewed the plan, they
22 have sufficient space there to access both the parks
23 and the buildings. There will not be on-street parking

1 I believe, on that street, correct me if I'm wrong
2 technical team, but it's a, you know, it's an existing
3 dead-end street, it'll continue to be a dead-end
4 street in the same width and dimension that it exists
5 today and FDNY was comfortable with the access.

6 COMM. RAMPERSHAD: Okay, good Thank you.

7 CHAIR LAREMONT: Are there any additional
8 questions from the Commission? Seeing none, I thank
9 the team for this presentation. And we will now move
10 on to public testimony. We will follow our procedure
11 of five speakers in opposition, followed by five
12 speakers and support going back and forth until the
13 speaker list is exhausted. I will tell you that we
14 have a large number of speakers signed up for this
15 hearing. First we will call on two speakers in
16 opposition, Robert Camacho an Ernest Augustus. Are
17 they available for speaking?

18 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Mr Camacho was. OK there we
19 go.

20 ROBERT CAMACHO: Hello. Hello. Hello. Hi hello
21 hello, is this the open restaurant? Or no is this
22 something else?

1 HOST (RYAN SINGER): This is the River ring so.
2 We'll get you signed up for open restaurants. We will
3 get you signed up for open restaurants. Thank you,
4 thank you.

5 ROBERT CAMACHO: Thank you. Sorry okay.

6 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Ah, Ernest.

7 CHAIR LAREMONT: Ernest Augustus.

8 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Ernest Augustus, there we go.
9 There you go. You're on open restaurants as well okay
10 you're a little. Okay, we will get you signed up
11 certainly.

12 CHAIR LAREMONT: Alright. So, then, we will move
13 on to speakers in favor, and the next speaker will be
14 Renzo Ramirez followed by Marissa Williams and then
15 Richard Mazur.

16 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Mr Ramirez, you should be
17 able to unmute your microphone and turn on your
18 camera.

19 RENZO RAMIREZ (32BJ SEIU): Can you guys hear me,
20 yes? Yes, sorry for the lighting. Good morning, Chair
21 Laremont and members of the Commission, my name is
22 Renzo Ramirez and I am a member of 32BJ. I work as

1 a doorman. As you know, 32BJ is the largest property
2 service union, representing 85,000 property service
3 workers across the city. We maintain, clean and
4 provide security services at buildings like the one
5 being discussed at River Ring. We estimate that this
6 rezoning, which will allow the construction of two
7 residential towers with nearly 300 affordable
8 apartments, community retail, and parking space, River
9 Ring will provide 500 permanent jobs and more than
10 2000 construction jobs on a site that currently
11 supports zero employment. The permanent jobs include
12 YMCA employees, building service workers, maintenance,
13 retail, and nonprofit employees. The commitment to
14 good permanent jobs in this project is clear. The best
15 way to make sure that developments, like the one being
16 proposed, have a positive impact on building services
17 is for developers to make a formal commitment to pay
18 the prevailing wage and create good jobs with family
19 sustaining wages and benefits. We are pleased to know
20 that the developer affiliated with this project, River
21 Street Partners, LLC., has a track record of creating
22 good jobs throughout their portfolio. River Street
23 Partners, LLC. has made an early commitment to
24 creating prevailing wage building service jobs at this

1 site, we are in full support of this project. These
2 jobs are typically filled by local members of the
3 community, and because of this commitment, will pay
4 family sustaining wages which help bring working
5 families into the middle class. The percentage of
6 affordable apartments are needed for working people in
7 Brooklyn. This affordable housing and commitment to
8 good prevailing wage jobs will give opportunity for
9 upward mobility security and dignity to working class
10 families. 32BJ supports responsible developers that
11 invest in the communities where they build, we know
12 that this development will continue to uphold the
13 industry standard and provide opportunities for
14 working families to thrive. Thank you very much.

15 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much Mr Ramirez,
16 are there any questions? Hearing none, thank you very
17 much, the next speaker will be Marissa Williams,
18 followed by Richard Mazur and then Juana Rodriguez. Is
19 Ms. Williams available?

20 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Ms. Williams is not in the
21 zoom.

22 CHAIR LAREMONT: So then, we move on to Richard
23 Mazur.

1 RICHARD MAZUR (North Brooklyn Development Corp.):
2 Yes, okay, good morning City Planning, I'm always
3 excited to speak in front of you, I'm Richard Mazur,
4 I've only lived in Greenpoint since my family
5 emigrated there in 1950 so as part of that blue
6 collar, Eastern European, Latino, people that couldn't
7 get access to the waterfront and live that i'm going
8 to put everything into context for you. We lived in an
9 industrial wasteland without access to the waterfront,
10 so a lot of the things that I've seen happen over the
11 past 71 years changed all of that, and not all for the
12 better, but I'm just going to put things in context.
13 I'm for this project, but remember that this was not
14 the waterfront that the community wanted initially
15 because City Planning, unfortunately, is a misnomer,
16 because we don't get to really plan things from
17 scratch, I think I suggested once in the 90s, when I
18 was chairing the 197A waterfront plan, that the City
19 just buy the whole waterfront for 100 million dollars
20 and then execute a plan based on what the community
21 wanted. In 2005, we did not want the total rezoning
22 with all the high rises, but unfortunately we did not
23 have the last word, and I believe the City Planning
24 Commission at the time, aside from the Brooklyn

1 planning Commissioner, voted to rezone us. So that's
2 the context that we're living in. And I just want to
3 move forward and say, Two Trees, as one of the
4 developers, to give us what the Community wants, has
5 been a great partner. They listen to us when we talk
6 about affordable housing. I do activism for both,
7 obviously affordable housing, youth programming,
8 environmental issues. I would like to see 100%
9 affordable, but that's not economically feasible. The
10 plan that they have is always very creative. They've
11 done a good job of listening to us, and I have no
12 relationship with them other than I've met them and I
13 know them, and for me, it's a wonderful thing to see,
14 to get access, finally, to the waterfront for all of
15 the people, where we only got access as children when
16 we snuck on and got into trouble. I also am very happy
17 to see that we will get a, you know, kind of a
18 neighborhood gym in the YMCA, and we'll finally get to
19 swim in a pool that's longer than 13 yards, and you
20 know we won't get bored. So in any event, we've
21 socially re-engineered the community but, given what
22 we've got, let's support this program to get our
23 housing, our children's program, and access to the
24 waterfront. Thank you very much.

1 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Mazur. I
2 wanted to just celebrate your commitment to this
3 community and sort of, your long term perspective on
4 this, and I will ask whether or not there are members
5 of the Commission that have questions for Mr. Mazur.
6 If not, thank you again for your testimony."

7 RICHARD MAZUR: Wow, thank you.

8 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you, the next speaker will
9 be Juana Rodriguez, followed by Edilsa Chavez and
10 Maria Llagar. Do we have Ms. Rodriguez? Not seeing Ms.
11 Rodriguez or hearing Ms. Rodriguez. They don't appear
12 to be in the zoom. Right. Okay. Okay okay.

13 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Sorry I'm sorry I was muted.

14 CHAIR LAREMONT: we'll hear from Edilsa Chavez,
15 followed by Maria Llagar. Is Edilsa Chavez available?

16 CO-HOST 2: They don't appear to be in zoom.

17 CHAIR LAREMONT: Neither of them okay.

18 CHAIR LAREMONT: Then we'll move on to Joel Towers
19 And Kendall Charter. Are they in the zoom?

20 CO-HOST 2: They are.

21 CHAIR LAREMONT: Okay Joel Towers.

1 JOEL TOWERS (Tishman Environment and Design
2 Center): Can you hear me? Thank you, thank you, Madam
3 Chair, members of the Commission. I'm very pleased to
4 speak in strong support of the River Ring project. I
5 am a professor of architecture and sustainable design
6 at Parsons School of Design and the former dean of
7 Parsons School of Design, and I am the director of the
8 Tishman Environment Design Center at the New School.
9 My expertise in the last 30 years is on sustainability
10 and resiliency, and I want to focus my comments in
11 that area and relationship to this project, both in
12 respect for your time and to be focused in my area of
13 expertise. The greatest threat that New York City
14 faces is of climate change, it is an existential
15 challenge to the city. I advise the city on these
16 matters and the project in front of us for
17 consideration is one that I think takes a really
18 leading and critical and important perspective on how
19 to address the water-to-land aspect of climate change.
20 In particular, we know that major storms and the
21 increased intensity and frequency of those storms
22 present flooding challenges for the city. Hurricane
23 Ida, just a few weeks ago, reminded us of that in the
24 most extreme way. And the type of storm that this

1 project prevents is one that will be, where we will be
2 able to help respond to is one that is going to be
3 increasingly part of our future. And so figuring out
4 how to address extreme wave actions, storm surges, the
5 kinds of energy that those storms bring, and the risk
6 that they present to our communities is a critical
7 aspect of waterfront development. And there are far
8 too few projects that take as engaged and progressive
9 of view as this one does. It is a lot easier in New
10 York City to build a hard seawall than it is do a
11 nature based solution, and those seawalls simply push
12 the problem off to neighboring projects when they
13 don't themselves fail in the process of managing storm
14 surge. Furthermore, the project, in my opinion, really
15 advances natural habitat restoration a critical
16 component of the health of the East river and the
17 entire estuary, and it opens to a more engaged
18 environmental education, the kind of community
19 knowledge necessary in a democratic society to push
20 for change. The last thing I'll say in my remaining a
21 few moments is that by working with as visionary an
22 architect as Bjarke Ingels, I will say that the
23 projects that they did in Copenhagen in the early days
24 of that harbor's regeneration really led to its

1 revitalization and an awareness of its benefit, and I
2 think the moves that this project makes have a very
3 similar potential to be transformative for the
4 waterfront. So I applaud it both from the standpoint
5 of architecture, and especially from the standpoint of
6 the developer taking these responsibilities, thank
7 you.

8 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Towers.
9 Are there any questions from the Commission for Mr.
10 Towers? If not, I thank you again for your testimony.
11 Thank you, I understand that Edilsa Chavez is in the
12 room and we can hear from her now Michelle is.

13 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Ms. Chavez, you should be
14 able to unmute your microphone. There we go.

15 EDILSA CHAVEZ: Hi, can you hear me? Yes hi, I'm
16 sorry I'm having difficulty, good morning.

17 My name is Edilsa Chavez, I'm 23 years old and
18 I've been living in the south side technically my
19 whole life. Personally I've seen a huge change in my
20 Community, starting from less gang members, which
21 equals less crime and drug contribution, giving me and
22 my community a peaceful state of mind. The reason why
23 I support the River Ring project, well, they deliver

1 massive public infrastructures and economic benefits,
2 without public tax dollars. It's a direct interaction
3 with the natural East River habitat. It also includes
4 more than 250 affordable housing, it also protects
5 property from flooding, it provides more than 500
6 well-paying permanent jobs, and it also will be
7 applying to be a part of the Department of
8 Environmental Protections District Water Reuse pilot
9 Program. And I would also like to add the idea of the
10 more affordable apartments, especially in areas like
11 mine which seek for improvement. For example, where I
12 live in the south side, I've never seen such a huge
13 change, I've been living there my whole life. When it
14 comes to seeing all these differences, because not
15 everybody has you know the income or resources to
16 afford housing, so I appreciate the fact that you're
17 helping us in a way, and yeah."

18 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, are there
19 any questions for Ms. Chavez?" Hearing none, we'll
20 move on. The next speaker will be Kendall Charter,
21 followed by Julia Foster and Paul Samulski. Oh sorry,
22 sorry Vice Chair Knuckles, I didn't see your hand, did
23 you have a question for her? No it's quite alright.

24 VICE-CHAIR KNUCKLES: Well, I did with regard to,

1 Ms. Chavez, as I'm sure you realize, there was some
2 audio problems there, so I wanted to just encourage
3 her if she wanted to make a written submission we'd be
4 very much receptive to that because the audio was in
5 and out. That's all I wanted to say.

6 CHAIR LAREMONT: I didn't hear that Thank you.
7 Thank you again okay. Kendall Charter.

8 KENDALL CHARTER (GREENPOINT YMCA): Good morning,
9 good morning everyone, my name is Kendall Charter, the
10 executive director of the Greenpoint YMCA. I, we are
11 thrilled to be part of the Two Trees project, which
12 will include a new state-of-the-art YMCA that will
13 serve thousands of families in Greenpoint and
14 Williamsburg. For the last two decades, the YMCA have
15 been looking for an opportunity to expand our presence
16 and increase our capacity in serving Greenpoint and
17 Williamsburg community. Being part of this project
18 expands our footprint in the neighborhood and it's
19 truly exciting. We welcome the opportunity to provide
20 additional services and resources to our community and
21 we remain committed to a presence in Greenpoint and
22 Williamsburg, working with our neighbors to build a
23 strong community for everyone, thank you.

1 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr Charter.
2 we all are excited about the Y. Are there any
3 questions from the Commission for Mr. Charter? Seeing
4 none, thank you for your testimony and we will move on
5 to the next testimony from to Julia Foster, Paul
6 Samulski, and William Thomas.

7 JULIA AMANDA FOSTER: Hi I'm Julia Foster, a
8 member of Williamsburg for over 60 plus years. I am
9 welcoming this project. Like I said i've been here 60
10 some odd years, and I've seen this neighborhood change
11 from the mom and pop stores, where people lived above
12 the stores and their families, and I hope you're
13 hearing me. And I would like to see this project,
14 because we're losing so many families in this
15 neighborhood. Although we've had people come in, we
16 haven't had a lot of families come in. We need to see
17 apartments that are affordable for families. Children.
18 I look around, even where I live and I don't see too
19 many little ones. I see more, the younger ones, and no
20 children. We need this building to invite families in.
21 The waterfront has been beautiful, since we got the
22 new Domino Park, I have a grandson who's on the
23 spectrum. He loves that park, even though he's 15 now
24 he loves to go down in that area. Oh, my goodness. My

1 other reason for supporting this is this: they want to
2 give us another homeless shelter. We don't need a
3 homeless shelter. Once again, we need homes, we need
4 apartments for people to live, and I'm hoping that
5 this project is going to be, and work with the
6 shelters, to bring in people from shelters into a home
7 so they will have a place to live. It is beautiful
8 down there, I've been going there since I was a kid,
9 like the other gentleman said, sneaking on when you
10 shouldn't have been there, and it's great to see the
11 fireworks and I hope that's a welcoming thing for them
12 too, and I just want to make a comment: Some folks are
13 opposed, and they claim they have over 7000 signatures
14 from this neighborhood. I have yet to see those
15 signatures, and I sit on Community Board 1. Also, not
16 only that, the signatures were some kind of automatic
17 thing you could go online and find. Who's to say those
18 people are from my neighborhood? I want to see it come
19 forward, and I say thank you - oh one more thing: less
20 bars, more homes. The planning committees have changed
21 our zoning that we have so many bars everywhere, I
22 looked I don't need to see a store to go shopping I
23 can't even go by deodorant unless I gotta go all the
24 way somewhere else, whereas I used to just walk out

1 the door. But anyhow less bars, more homes, less
2 shelters, more homes, thank you River Trees, thank
3 you, thank you, thank you, I look forward to seeing
4 these go up. Jobs, so forth, so forth. Thank you Madam
5 Chair, thank you committee for letting me speak and I
6 hope this goes through. Have a blessed day everyone.

7 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you, are there any
8 questions? If not, I thank you very much for your
9 testimony and the next person will be Paul Samulski,
10 followed by William Thomas, and then Viviana Francisco
11 de Jesus.

12 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Mr. Samulski? yeah he's here.
13 Can you hear us? You should be able to speak now Mr.
14 Samulski.

15 PAUL SAMULSKI (North Brooklyn Chamber): Hello, am
16 I being heard? Yes? Oh great, hi, good morning members
17 of the Commission, my name is Paul Samulski and I'm
18 the president of the North Brooklyn Chamber. We are a
19 hyper-local Brooklyn business organization that
20 represents Bushwick, Greenpoint, and Williamsburg. Our
21 history with Two Trees goes back well over a decade,
22 and during that period of time, they have proven to be
23 a respectful and trustworthy local business that has

1 always incorporated genuine broad-based community
2 engagement in their planning processes. This project
3 is no different, taking a large vacant industrial
4 waterfront lot and replacing it with an impressive
5 development that would include a significant number of
6 affordable housing units, acres of public office
7 space, a new improved location for our local Y, and
8 along the way, offering over 2000 well-paying
9 construction and other related jobs is a no brainer
10 for our organization to support. In addition, as a
11 senior member of the management team behind the launch
12 of the original East River ferry and someone who
13 appreciates and understands the many changing moods of
14 our local waterways, the thoughtful and intelligent
15 design they've come up with which incorporates proven
16 sustainability efforts utilized as natural barriers to
17 storm surges and flooding is to be commended. Also to
18 be commended is their commitment to fill affordable
19 units and neighboring apartments, and their promise to
20 give priority to local CB1 applicants when the housing
21 lottery commences. The North Brooklyn Chamber is
22 unanimously in favor of the River Ring project, and
23 look forward to working with Two Trees in any way we
24 can to help make this project a reality. Their body of

1 work and their passion for forward-thinking and
2 intelligent design has gained them our support, thank
3 you very much.

4 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr.
5 Samulski, are there any questions for Mr. Samulski? If
6 not, thank you again and we will move on to William
7 Thomas followed by Viviana Francisco de Jesus and then
8 Millie Khemiri.

9 WILLIAM THOMAS (OPEN NEW YORK): Hi there, can you
10 hear me? Beautiful. Hi everyone, my name is Will
11 Thomas, I'm here to support the proposal for River
12 Ring, as the Executive Director of Open New York.
13 We're an independent grassroots pro housing
14 organization, we believe that the project will help to
15 alleviate New York's dire housing shortage and
16 actively help to cut displacement and surrounding
17 areas. City Planning knows that New York has a dire
18 housing shortage, but I'll toss out a few numbers they
19 usually do with these hearings so everyone can
20 remember how bad it is. Between 2010 and 2017, median
21 rents increased by more than double median wages.
22 Homelessness has reached the highest level since the
23 1930s, the height of the Great Depression."

1 Pre-COVID, one out of every 10 elementary school
2 students in New York City public schools went home to
3 shelters so moving on from a global pandemic will need
4 as much affordable housing as we can get and the 260
5 below market homes in this proposal are an obvious
6 step in the right direction. That said, the market
7 rate homes will also help, by proactively preventing
8 displacement elsewhere. The median household income of
9 the census tract that includes River Ring is now well
10 over six figures. More broadly, the Williamsburg
11 waterfront is an extremely desirable area, and
12 although maybe likely be many families first choice,
13 if the wealthy can't find new places to live here
14 they're simply going to bid up the price of existing
15 housing, and the families who would otherwise have
16 lived in that housing will instead move to more
17 affordable neighborhoods. As displaced demand
18 increases, up goes the rent, which forces current
19 tenants to allocate ever larger shares their income to
20 stay in their homes and not to those who can't pay to
21 the street. If we don't let young professionals live
22 here, they're not going to disappear, they're going to
23 continue to further displacement pressures in East
24 Williamsburg, Bushwick, and more of Brooklyn. City

1 Planning should attempt to spare families this
2 pressure by supporting this project. Last but not
3 least, I think the City Planning Commission should
4 consider making one ask of the developer. They're
5 seeking a waiver to lower their parking. I think the
6 city ought to go one step further and mandate that the
7 developer include no parking whatsoever completely in
8 this project as parking is proven to add substantially
9 to housing prices. Ideally, they can replace the
10 parking with more affordable housing, but almost
11 anything will be an improvement over a costly garage.
12 We just think it's a mistake to have any parking in
13 such a walkable neighborhood. Thank you."

14 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Thomas,
15 are there any questions from the Commission. Seeing no
16 raised hands I'll Thank you again. We'll move on to
17 Viviana Francisco de Jesus, followed by Millie Khemiri
18 and then Arelis Puljols. Ms. de Jesus, you should be
19 able to unmute there you go.

20 HOST (RYAN SINGER): We had we promoted her hold
21 on a moment.

22 JAMEELA RODRIGUEZ (TWO TREES): Hi, can you hear
23 me? Okay hi my name is Jameela Rodriguez, I am the

1 community organizer with Two Trees, I am with a group
2 of four Spanish-speaking women from the community just
3 making it accessible to them.

4 HOST (RYAN SINGER): let's reset the clock to five
5 minutes if you're, are you going to be doing
6 consecutive translation?

7 JAMEELA RODRIGUEZ (TWO TREES): Would you like
8 them to speak in their voice in Spanish?

9 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Yeah we do, if you are going
10 to be able to do consecutive translation, they can
11 speak, and you can translate. We will give you five
12 minutes total.

13 JAMEELA RODRIGUEZ (TWO TREES): Sure, so you
14 called Juana Rodriguez we will start with Juana.

15 JUANA DE JESUS: *TESTIMONY IN SPANISH*

16 JAMEELA RODRIGUEZ (TWO TREES) [translating on
17 behalf of JUANA DE JESUS]: Good morning, my name is
18 Juana Rodriguez, I live in Williamsburg for more than
19 30 years. I'm very happy with the River Ring project
20 with the affordable housing opportunities. For me, I,
21 like the fact that the apartments, the development is
22 next to the water, giving us access to the waterfront

1 and I support the YMCA facility, I am a very active
2 person myself. I also like the fact that there will be
3 opportunities, job opportunities, especially for the
4 youth, unfortunately, a lot of the youth have had to
5 leave the area, because it is too expensive, thank
6 you.

7 JAMEELA RODRIGUEZ (TWO TREES): Should I move on
8 to the next person or?

9 HOST (RYAN SINGER): who's the next person?

10 JAMEELA RODRIGUEZ (TWO TREES): Okay, Maria Llagar
11 is next.

12 CHAIR LAREMONT: Hold on I don't see these people
13 on my speaker list.

14 HOST (RYAN SINGER): If we could get the folks
15 signed up, we can we can have them speak with can call
16 it will call the next speaker.

17 JAMEELA RODRIGUEZ (TWO TREES): Okay, they were
18 all signed up a little earlier and have received
19 confirmation. Maria Llagar, Arelis Puljols, and
20 Bernarda Tavares.

21 HOST (RYAN SINGER): We have, yes, we have Arelis.

1 MISTER SECRETARY: let's set the clock for five
2 minutes.

3 ARELIS PULJOLS: Good morning, good afternoon, my
4 name is Arelis Puljols, I am glad to be here and live
5 in this Community, but I am I wanting to have access
6 to the apartment to a new apartment because I live
7 more than four years in this area, I don't want to
8 move to a different place. I know they want to take
9 out, you know off from here, and I want to stay, I
10 want to live in Williamsburg, so I love this area and
11 I want to know if, you know, we want to be available
12 to have an apartment. And I like the - I am going to
13 be happy if I get an apartment next to the river. If
14 the people have new jobs, I love the place where I
15 live, so I want to stay here forever, so I am happy
16 you have this project. So thank you for everything and
17 I like to be fortunate, I want to be a fortunate for
18 this project. Okay, thank you.

19 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Ms. Puljols.

20 Are there any questions from the Commission for
21 Ms. Puljols? Commissioner Marin.

22 COMM. MARIN: Not a question, but I just want to
23 say for Ms. Puljols, that when the project does come

1 online there'll be an offering through a lottery
2 through HPD, and there's preference given to the
3 Community and that's your opportunity to apply for the
4 project, so I just wanted to make that clear to you.

5 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you, Commissioner Marin.
6 Are there any additional questions? Are there any
7 further people who signed up to speak with this
8 translator?

9 HOST (RYAN SINGER): There was a, you said, did I
10 hear a Bernarda Tavares?

11 JAMEELA RODRIGUEZ (TWO TREES): Yes, she is
12 present.

13 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Okay that's the last one,
14 Chair, that I have signed up.

15 BERNARDA TAVARES: *TESTIMONY IN SPANISH*

16 JAMEELA RODRIGUEZ (TWO TREES) [translating on
17 behalf of BERNARDA TAVARES]: Good day, I have been in
18 this neighborhood for more than 40 years. I support
19 this project, my daughter had to move out of the
20 neighborhood to New Jersey and I hate to see that.
21 Most of the opportunities are being given to people
22 from different zones, and so I support this project. I

1 believe that the people that have been here for many
2 years, deserve to have nice apartments by the
3 waterfront, I would like to have an apartment where I
4 can see the Manhattan skyline I also support the
5 project because it'll bring more local jobs and YMCA
6 facility, we all deserve to live on an improvement of
7 lifestyle. Thank you, good day.

8 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Ms. Tavares.
9 Are there any questions from the Commission for Ms.
10 Tavares? Seeing none, we will move on. Thanks for the
11 translation. I think that the next speaker is Millie
12 Khemiri who will be followed by Harrison Grinnan and
13 Alex Vallejo.

14 MILLIE KHEMIRI: Good afternoon, this is Millie
15 Khemiri, did you guys hear me? Yes, hi, my name is
16 Millie Khemiri. Thank you, good afternoon City
17 Planning Commission. My name is Millie Khemiri and I'm
18 a licensed social worker with the administration for
19 children services, ACS, and a longtime resident in
20 Williamsburg, for for the past 36 years. I fully
21 support the River Ring project. I love what Two Trees
22 has done in my community. I have seen the positive
23 impact, becoming a good neighbor, and it has been

1 instrumental to transform the waterfront in the south
2 side of Williamsburg. This is a critical housing site
3 in a city that has a growing housing crisis. New York
4 City, as you know, is facing an affordable housing
5 crisis that will only escalate without immediate and
6 direct action. The most effective way to combat this
7 crisis is to build more houses, especially affordable
8 housing for low income families, and this is an
9 obvious and critical side for such an undertaking.
10 This community has long sought to replace empty sites
11 like this with housing and open space. This site is
12 one of our last chances to access significant open
13 space on the waterfront side, which is exactly what
14 this is. I have seen how this neighborhood has
15 gentrified. I don't think it's fair to leave it, to
16 leave this land vacant or turn it into a factory. In
17 addition, my nieces and I have truly enjoyed Domino
18 park and I'm excited even tonight to participate in
19 Salsa by the water with a nearby studio. I'm super
20 excited to have a YMCA in the area for the children
21 and community to enjoy. This will also create an
22 opportunity where New Yorkers of all ages can interact
23 with the river, touch and feel the water to help
24 change how we think about our future in light of

1 climate change. The new approach to the water will
2 provide a six-acre model for resiliency, ecology,
3 education, recreation, and community building, which I
4 am so excited to see, so I'm fully in support of the
5 River Ring project, thank you for your time and have a
6 great day.

7 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much. Are there
8 any questions for Ms. Khemiri? Seeing none I will
9 thank you and we will move on to Harrison Grinnan to
10 be followed by Alex Vallejo and then Joseph Sutkowi.

11 HARRISON GRINNAN: Hello, my name is Harrison
12 Grinnan, I'm here as a resident of Greenpoint speaking
13 in support of this project. This project has unanimous
14 support from the speakers so far, it had almost
15 unanimous support at the previous hearing for the
16 Brooklyn Borough President. It had majority support at
17 the Community Board, it had almost unanimous support
18 again at the scoping hearing, which was a while ago at
19 the beginning of summer. This is a really good project
20 I don't think I almost need to say much in support of
21 it. The only thing that really sticks out to me is
22 that the Community Board representative recommended
23 chopping the bulk by 30%. I think that's horrendous, I

1 think we cannot do that. Those are 300 homes that this
2 area needs and that the city needs, so I'd like to
3 kind of get into that. So, there was recently, at the
4 Community board meeting we all attended and we heard
5 about how we're going to add a lot of homes, and it
6 was going to kind of soften the shorelines so that we
7 could withstand storm surges better. That was the
8 night of Hurricane Ida. On the walk home from that
9 back to Greenpoint from the school that that was held
10 at, I encountered floodwaters that are about two feet
11 high that covered my kneecaps, and I'm a tall guy. It
12 is shocking to me to see that. I'd never seen a flood
13 warning before in New York City. If that's not a wake-
14 up call, I don't know what is, both in terms of the
15 need for this infrastructure, but also in terms of
16 need for housing. When that floodwaters coming down I
17 knew there would be deaths. I've been involved in
18 trying to push for the ADU bill for a while. There's
19 100,000 people, at least, that live under the ground
20 in New York City in illegal basement apartments. Those
21 people need houses. And our Attorney General Leticia
22 James has said that we should give them vouchers, but
23 there's nowhere for them, for them to move, they could
24 only leave the city. We built, I think about 100,000

1 units over the last decade, we need to lease that
2 number just to get people out of these basements that
3 are flooded. This is 1000 homes, it's not going to get
4 us all the way there, but it's a start, and this is a
5 perfect place for it, you know it's a tower that's
6 going in between two towers. It's creating a giant new
7 park, it's got all these community amenities, it's by
8 all means, like this is a slam dunk project, and I
9 think that it's most likely, it seems like it's going
10 to go through to me. I would like the parking cut, I
11 would like you know, a couple more lower levels of
12 affordability in exchange for less parking. I don't
13 know, I think it's a very good project, but I think in
14 a certain sense, really good projects like this, the
15 danger is that this becomes the standard. This is a
16 great project, but not every project has to be a giant
17 new park and you know, a new gym and its own sewage
18 treatment plant, like that's a high standard, I think
19 we need to make sure that when we're approving great
20 projects like this, we also know that the project, the
21 problem we're facing is that we need to produce
22 500,000 to a million units of housing over the next
23 decade, or else the city's never going to be
24 affordable again, and this is how we start to get

1 there, but we need to really ramp it up, thank you for
2 your time.

3 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Grinnan
4 for your thoughtful comments. And I will just tell you
5 that much of what you said, we believe in very firmly
6 here at City Planning. Are there any questions for Mr
7 Grinnan from the Commission? Seeing none, I will thank
8 you again for your testimony. The next speaker will be
9 Alex Vallejo to be followed by Joseph Sutkowi, and
10 then Joe Chan.

11 ALEX VALLEJO: Hi, how are you, I'm Alexis
12 Vallejo, I'm actually a business owner that's right
13 next to the site, I actually have a barber shop there.
14 I'm all for this project, and I thought it was great
15 from the beginning, as far as affordable housing, I
16 agree, as far as you know, we have to try to keep a
17 lot of the people that grew up in that neighborhood or
18 give them a chance to stay in the neighborhood. I'm
19 all for the affordable housing part and the YMCA and
20 the parks part, all of it is wonderful, I think, as
21 long as we can all come to an agreement with
22 everything. It's a great project and Two Trees is a
23 great company, we saw what they did with Domino park.

1 My kids love that park, they also love the little
2 ballpark that they just recently put as well, so, as
3 far as everything as a whole, I think it is all great
4 as a business owner, and I know a lot of the other
5 business owners that are right there, it would
6 definitely help all of us, and any other businesses
7 that are going to get put there so um. I just agree
8 with the whole thing as far as everything as a whole
9 if we could all just come to an agreement and
10 everybody is, for the most part, happy with
11 everything, there's no way how it would be a bad
12 impact in the neighborhood. I think it would just be a
13 great addition, and everybody would be happy with it,
14 especially with all the amenities, and the new
15 apartments that will be coming in, so that's all.
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Vallejo.
18 Are there any questions from the Commission for Mr.
19 Vallejo? If not, we will move on to Joseph Sutkowi, to
20 be followed by Joe Chan and then Luke Grochowski.

21 JOSEPH SUTKOWI (WATERFRONT ALLIANCE): Good
22 afternoon, can everybody hear me? Yes, great. Thank
23 you, my name is Joseph Sutkowi. I'm the waterfront

1 design associate director at the Waterfront Alliance
2 which is the leader in waterfront revitalization
3 climate resilience and advocacy for the New York and
4 New Jersey harbor region. The waterfront alliance is
5 committed to sustainability and to mitigating effects
6 of climate change across the region's hundreds of
7 miles of waterfront, and to that end, we support the
8 River ring proposal. The two trees project team is
9 currently undergoing our waterfront edge design
10 guidelines or WEDGE verification process which we
11 oversee. WEDGE was launched about seven years ago and
12 has evolved to become the premier climate resilience
13 verification and transparency rating system for
14 coastal developments and retrofits. To obtain WEDGE
15 verification, much like a LEED certification, coastal
16 developments must meet design standards for climate
17 change resiliency. They have to provide access and
18 benefits to the public and must be designed to
19 maximize and protect ecological integrity. Domino
20 sugar is WEDGE verified, as are eight other projects
21 across New York City, and there's a there's a few more
22 under review. While the final verification of River
23 Ring will only be completed on reviewing the
24 construction documents, the concept plans have already

1 gone through a preliminary review process overseen by
2 Waterfront Alliance and they've had a strong outcome
3 for the initial scores. Based on the concept designs
4 that our WEDGE reviewers analyzed, River Ring will
5 likely meet or exceed requirements on key aspects in
6 climate resilience, public access, sustainability,
7 community engagement, and innovation. The waterfront
8 projects that seek WEDGE verification earn points
9 across six different categories and there are 36
10 different credits in the rating system that helps
11 guide projects towards specific strategies that make
12 up excellent waterfront design. These include things
13 like assessing current and future coastal risks to sea
14 level rise and storm surge and rain based flooding,
15 conducting an equitable public engagement process to
16 maximize community outcomes, siting and designing to
17 reduce risks to coastal hazards through setbacks,
18 nature based and structural strategies, creating
19 inspiring state-of-the-art shorelines that promote
20 resilience ecology and direct access for recreation
21 programming, and then reimagining urban habitats and
22 green infrastructure through landscape design and
23 stormwater management. The Brooklyn Borough board had
24 agreed with these principles in 2019 when they adapted

1 resolution encouraging the use of WEDGE guidelines for
2 all ULURP projects. The Waterfront Alliance believes
3 this is the right project at the right time for the
4 city's waterfront, and we urge the City Planning
5 Commission to support the land use actions necessary
6 to make River Ring possible. Thank you.

7 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, Mr. Sutkowi.
8 Are there any questions from the Commission? Seeing
9 none, I thank you again, and our next speaker will be
10 Joe Chan.

11 JOE CHAN (YMCA): Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm Joe
12 Chan, I'm the Senior Vice President for real estate
13 and property management at the YMCA of greater New
14 York. I know the Kendall Charter, our executive
15 director for the Greenpoint branch said a few words
16 earlier and I just wanted to add a little bit of
17 citywide context and color to Kendall's testimony. As
18 Kendall had mentioned, the creation of a new YMCA in
19 Community district 1 has been a huge priority of the
20 YMCA citywide for the past few decades, and there's a
21 few reasons why. The Greenpoint YMCA, our current
22 branch, is old, actually the oldest in our network in
23 New York City, it was built in 1906. Anyone who's

1 visited there can testify to the fact that it's also
2 labyrinthine and not necessarily efficiently organized
3 for modern-day membership and program uses, and it's
4 absolutely tiny. It's one of our smallest YMCAs
5 citywide, and to Richard's point, that the pool is 13
6 yards long, I think Richard is actually being generous
7 on that front, so we are very eager to serve the
8 Community in a 2021 fashion, as opposed to a 1906
9 fashion. As Kendall mentioned, we looked all over, we
10 looked at public sites, we looked at private sites.
11 Land costs in Greenpoint and Williamsburg were
12 absolutely prohibitive, we concluded that, in order to
13 acquire a site and build the YMCA would be three to
14 four times what we had budgeted. We searched in
15 detail, for many, many years, and a few years ago were
16 approached by Two Trees, and we found this to be a
17 great location at a great price, and we were
18 particularly impressed with the location being just
19 north of Domino Park, which we really believe to be
20 one of the greatest and most inclusive public spaces
21 in New York City. So I know I'm short on time, what we
22 are going to get is a YMCA that is more than two times
23 larger than the YMCA that we have now. The pool will
24 be multiple times bigger, the gymnasium in the fitness

1 center will be notably bigger, and we will have many
2 times more multipurpose rooms where we can host
3 community and educational programming. So we're
4 enthusiastic in our support of River Ring and
5 enthusiastic about the potential partner that we have
6 in Two Trees, thank you and happy to answer any
7 questions.

8 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much, are there
9 any questions for Mr. Chan? If not, thank you, Joe
10 very much. We'll move on to Luke Grochowski, who I
11 believe will be followed by Allison Stone and then
12 Ramon Peguero.

13 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Mr. Grochowski, you should be
14 able to unmute your microphone and just one note,
15 before we start, Madam Chair, do you see Jameela
16 Rodriguez on your list?

17 CHAIR LAREMONT: I thought, yes, I thought she
18 already spoke.

19 HOST (RYAN SINGER): We can check with her yeah.
20 Okay, go ahead, Mr. Grochowski.

21 LUKASZ GROCHOWSKI: Thank you hello, thank you for
22 giving the opportunity to talk, I just want to say I

1 was born and raised in Greenpoint and yeah, I've seen
2 the area change a lot, I wanted to say a few positive
3 things about the River Ring. You know, of course I've
4 been following the story, and I'm reiterating
5 something that I've said in previous meetings. I'm
6 hearing a lot of complaints about Bushwick Inlet park
7 that hasn't been finished and that, for some reason
8 River Ring shouldn't have the opportunity to be
9 finished because of that, and I just don't understand
10 that support for Bushwick Inlet while, you know,
11 trying to withhold this park. I mean this park is the
12 missing piece in that waterfront, and the plan that
13 Two Trees has put forward, I mean it's amazing. I mean
14 this is what all of the waterfront developments should
15 be doing and it's an example of what we should be
16 striving for, basically having access again and having
17 a conversation again with the waterfront, and
18 educating people about how to care for it, how to then
19 be good students for it. And it's a big park. I've
20 heard people say that it's only three acres, it's
21 going to be small, but I mean, full capacity, it's
22 2000 people, you know, you go and see Domino park, its
23 enormous and so many people take advantage of it. Then
24 also, I was really nostalgic about hearing, I believe,

1 Rich, talk about sneaking into the waterfront to, you
2 know, back when the buildings were still abandoned,
3 and I have really good fond memories of it. I really
4 feel like I'm really happy that a lot of the
5 waterfront has opened up again and it's becoming
6 parks, but that access to the waterfront and access to
7 being able to touch the water and learn about it,
8 that's something that I feel like River Ring is really
9 going to provide that's really excellent to the
10 Community. I know it's a big development, you know,
11 but the floodgates have been opened up with that, with
12 all the other development and see those be tall towers
13 everywhere along the waterfront. So, this type of
14 space, I mean I would hate to see it go, I really love
15 what you're doing with Billion Oyster Project and all
16 these other, you know, kayaking companies, I mean it's
17 really important for us to have access to the
18 waterfront and to have a park like this. Thank you
19 everybody.

20 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you very much Mr.
21 Grochowski. Are there any questions from the
22 Commission for Mr Grochowski? If not, we will move on
23 to the next speaker, Ryan I didn't intend to skip any
24 one, I thought Ms. Rodriguez had spoken, if she has,

1 we will move on. So the next speaker will be Allyson
2 Stone, to be followed by Ramon Peguero and then Ray
3 Acosta.

4 ALLYSON STONE: Hello, good afternoon. Can
5 everyone hear me? Fantastic. Hello, my name is Allyson
6 Stone, I'm a resident on the South side of
7 Williamsburg, just a few blocks away from Domino park
8 and the proposed area for the River Ring project. I'm
9 a member of Community Board One, and I also supported
10 and approved this project leading up to today's public
11 meeting. I think what a lot of people have already
12 said on this call, I echo. There's similar sentiments
13 about the positive impact that Two Trees has had on
14 the immediate neighborhood, and as one of my fellow
15 board members Julia Foster mentioned earlier, for a
16 while you've seen a trend as young families, such as
17 myself, who were having children and moving out either
18 to the great suburbs of either New York, New Jersey,
19 Long Island, you name it, especially with the
20 pandemic, and I think that there's no better developer
21 than Two Trees to get this project done. If you've
22 noticed, Domino park is pristine on a regular basis
23 and they've done a lot to help give back to the
24 neighborhood. Earlier in the spring, I hosted a

1 community cleanup after I was up to my hands and ears
2 with trash, and Domino park was the first to step up
3 to the plate, the first to offer supplies to help
4 clean up the neighborhood, and together we cleaned up
5 over 50 bags of trash within a four block radius of
6 the south side of Williamsburg. I completely support
7 their mission, not only with this project, but as a
8 company at large. And as someone with a three year old
9 son and a family here, we're very well rooted and
10 grounded here, in our beloved neighborhood in north
11 Brooklyn. And I support this project and look forward
12 to even more green space, even more of a wonderful
13 waterfront for myself, my neighbors, all of you, and
14 certainly the future generations that want to live
15 here in the neighborhood. Thank you.

16 CHAIR LAREMONT: Any questions for Ms. Stone? If
17 not, I will thank you for your testimony and your
18 community engagement.

19 CHAIR LAREMONT: The next speaker will be Ramon
20 Peguero, to be followed by Ray Acosta and Ankur Dalal.

21 RAMON PEGUERO (COMMITTEE FOR HISPANIC CHILDREN
22 AND FAMILIES): Thank you, good afternoon Madam Chair
23 and Commissioners, my name is Ramon Peguero, President

1 and CEO of the Committee for Hispanic Children and
2 Families, board Chair of the board of Nuestros Ninos
3 Child Development Center, and board member of the
4 Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation. I was
5 brought to Williamsburg at the age of six, was raised
6 there, raised my family there, and for the past 20
7 years, have been serving the most vulnerable
8 population amongst us, through my nonprofit
9 affiliations. Williamsburg means a lot of different
10 things to different people, but we all agree that
11 Williamsburg has become one of the most sought-after
12 communities in the State of New York if not the
13 country. This is why I was so happy to hear that Two
14 Trees, a reputable developer with over 10 years'
15 experience in developing the waterfront in
16 Williamsburg, was proposing a new development, the
17 River Ring. And, by the way, when Domino's was being
18 developed, I was there having conversations with Two
19 Trees. I'm happy to report that every promise that
20 they have made to the community, they have kept. The
21 development looks to add over 260 much-needed
22 affordable housing units to the Community as well as
23 workforce development and employment opportunities.
24 Some will argue that this is not enough and I agree,

1 but the alternative of zero affordable housing is
2 worse. Other states that we should have 100%
3 affordable housing or nothing at all. This is the
4 position of the privileged, who have nothing to lose
5 if new affordable housing is not built, since they
6 have the financial flexibility to house their families
7 anywhere they wish. The women, children, and families
8 of the Williamsburg community cannot wait any longer.
9 This project will not satisfy all of the affordable
10 housing needs of the Community and, yes, we will
11 always want more affordable housing, and will continue
12 to fight for the same. However, the one thing we
13 cannot do is vote no on this project. To do that would
14 be a slap in the face of the most vulnerable amongst
15 us, who look to you to find rational solutions to some
16 of their most difficult daily issues, housing being
17 one of them. I ask the City Planning Commission to
18 side with the vast majority of community members that
19 are in support of this project, and that are looking
20 forward to the affordable housing and employment
21 opportunities that this development will bring. I
22 thank you for your anticipated approval of this
23 proposal, and your service to the City of New York,
24 and its residents. Thank you.

1 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you. Are there any
2 questions? If not, I thank you for your testimony, and
3 we will move on to Ray Acosta, to be followed by Ankur
4 Dalal and Randy Peers.

5 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Mr. Acosta, you should be
6 able to unmute your microphone and turn on your
7 camera.

8 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Having technical
9 difficulties, Mr. Acosta. Okay.

10 CHAIR LAREMONT: We will go on to Ankur Dalal, if
11 Mr. Acosta is able to speak, we'll get him later.

12 ANKUR DALAL: Hi, this is Ankur Dalal, can you
13 hear me? I am here to testify in favor of the River
14 Ring proposal and to urge the City Planning Commission
15 to reject the suggestions of the Community Board to
16 remove 300 homes and support the proposal as presented
17 by the developer, only adding conditions they believe
18 that the developer can reasonably meet. This is a
19 proposal that will result in over 1000 new homes for
20 individuals and families, including hundreds of
21 affordable permanently affordable rentals, a public
22 park, beach, and a YMCA. Our housing crisis is
23 profound, and saying no to this rezoning means telling

1 hundreds of families that Williamsburg is not willing
2 to provide them affordable homes. At the Community
3 board hearing, there was a lot of discussion about how
4 the Community needs to get more public space and
5 public facilities from spot rezonings. That's exactly
6 what this rezoning does. It provides a beach,
7 parkland, and a YMCA. That said, in my view, even if
8 these incredible public benefits didn't exist, our
9 attitude towards a project like this should be getting
10 to yes, because the housing alone is worth it. I
11 became involved in local hearings like this because
12 I've seen too many of my friends priced out of New
13 York City. It's time we start saying yes to new homes
14 and development. Saying yes here in Williamsburg,
15 saying yes in SoHo, saying yes in Gowanus, saying yes
16 throughout the entire city. To that end, while I'm
17 glad the Community Board ultimately approved the
18 application, I urge the CPC to reject some of the
19 conditions, specifically the elimination of nearly a
20 third of the units and an increase to 50% affordable
21 units. While we all want as many homes as affordable,
22 I know here, as I did in my testimony to the Community
23 board, that people don't live in percentages, they
24 live in homes. Losing one third of the units while

1 demanding half of them be rented at below market rates
2 would only ensure the project not go forward at all.
3 If the project isn't viable, 50% of zero homes becomes
4 zero affordable homes built. These conditions are not
5 designed to actually maximize the number of affordable
6 units. I would support changes that could result in
7 additional homes, however, whether that means
8 increasing the FAR or removing any required parking. I
9 also believe that the Community Board's hostility to
10 the size of the project is not actually representative
11 of the Community's view. At the Brooklyn Borough
12 President's hearing, and at this hearing, over 80% of
13 the dozens of speakers spoke in favor of the proposal,
14 as is. The Brooklyn Eagle reported that at the
15 Brooklyn Borough President hearing, the support was
16 overwhelming, as you've seen this afternoon as well, I
17 urge the CPC to support the proposal as it is. Thank
18 you.

19 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you, are there any
20 questions? If not, thank you Mr. Dalal, and the next
21 speaker will be Randy Peers, followed by Jesus Hierro
22 and then Cristiano Rossi.

23

1 HOST (RYAN SINGER): Mr Peers is not in the zoom.
2 Not seeing him, but we will follow up and track these
3 folks.

4 CHAIR LAREMONT: So we'll go on to Cristiano Rossi
5 to be followed by Stephanie Jairam and then Terry
6 Carta.

7 CRISTIANO ROSSI: Hello, hi. Good morning, my name
8 is Cristiano Rossi. First thing, sorry for my
9 English, I am Italian. I own a hospitality company
10 with different kitchens in New York City. When I moved
11 from Italy here, to my first location, I selected and
12 I opened my first place in Williamsburg. I opened here
13 because in Europe, we are very developed, the
14 waterfront of all the city. All the restaurants, all
15 the life, it's close to the waterfront. That is
16 something that never really happened in New York, but
17 when I saw this project, I see the future, how it can
18 become this waterfront. And for this reason I opened a
19 location very close to the Two Trees project. And
20 because I think I know that in the future it will
21 become a very great area with a lot of people that can
22 come here and enjoy the amazing project and amazing
23 park. It will be a great opportunity for all people

1 that have business, like me, for all the neighbors in
2 the area. And that's how I spoke with my client that
3 come in my restaurant here, in my first location that
4 I opened here, everybody loves coming here. But
5 everybody would like to know and enjoy much better,
6 this waterfront. And the project that they have, I
7 think, is the best thing that the city can have in
8 this place. Thank you and I really support this thing.
9 I hope it's very, very soon, thank you very much.

10 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you, Mr. Rossi. any
11 questions from the Commission for Mr. Rossi? If not,
12 we'll move on to Stephanie Jairam, to be followed by
13 Terry Carta and Paul Pullo.

14 CO-HOST: Stephanie is not in the room.

15 CHAIR LAREMONT: Then we'll go on to Terry Carta.

16 TERRI CARTA (BROOKLYN GREENWAY): Commissioners,
17 my name is Terry Carta and I'm the Executive Director
18 of Brooklyn Greenway Initiative. Thank you for the
19 opportunity to testify in support of the River Ring
20 proposal on behalf of Brooklyn Greenway Initiative or
21 BGI as I will refer to it. We are a nonprofit
22 organization that, for two decades, has been focused
23 on the Brooklyn waterfront greenway as a 26-mile green

1 ribbon of active transportation and open space from
2 Greenpoint to East New York around the Borough of
3 Brooklyn. BGI supports Two Trees' River Ring proposal
4 and asks the City Planning Commission to approve the
5 application as presented by the developer. The city's
6 open space has never been more critical to the mental
7 and physical health of new Yorkers. There's also very
8 clearly an urgent need to address climate change and
9 increase resilience along New York's coastline, by
10 creating soft edge and living shoreline, increasing
11 public access to the waterfront, balancing growth and
12 risk through land use policy, and capturing the value
13 of parks through creative partnership and funding
14 models that carefully respond to local needs and
15 context. But opportunities for creating new parks and
16 waterfront access are few and far between and public
17 funding for the construction and especially for the
18 ongoing maintenance of these spaces is severely
19 lacking. Public Private Partnerships are proven
20 solution, and Two Trees is a responsible partner.

21 The River Ring proposed waterfront park and
22 protected in-water access would introduce an entirely
23 new waterfront experience, rarely seen in North
24 Brooklyn, with beaches, shallow waters, and tidal

1 pools. The River ring would be one of the last
2 remaining stitches in the green ribbon around the
3 waterfront. And I also want to underscore the ability
4 and the commitment of Two Trees to the ongoing
5 maintenance and operation of the waterfront park,
6 which would be a significant ongoing investment in the
7 local community and the public realm at large, without
8 adding to the city budget. We need to protect our
9 shorelines from sea level rise and super storms, we
10 need to foster greater connections between our open
11 spaces and communities, and we need to leverage the
12 private sector to make bold investments in our public
13 realm. Let us work with responsible and responsive
14 partners that understand the magnitude and the urgency
15 of our current challenges and have the experience to
16 help solve them. Two Trees is this partner, and the
17 proposal for River Ring will help address the
18 challenges we face. Thank you again for the
19 opportunity to speak today.

20 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you, are there any
21 questions from the Commission for Ms. Carta? If not, I
22 thank you for your testimony and we will move on to
23 Paul Pullo, to be followed by Peter Malinowski.

1 CO-HOST: Paul is not here.

2 CHAIR LAREMONT: Okay, Peter Malinowski to be
3 followed by Catharina Giono and Katie Danny Horowitz.

4 Peter Malinowski: Hi, can you hear me?

5 CHAIR LAREMONT: Yes.

6 Peter Malinowski: Good afternoon, Commissioners
7 and Chair Laremont thanks so much for giving me the
8 opportunity to testify today." My name is Pete
9 Malinowski, and I'm the Executive Director of Billion
10 Oyster Project. We are a nonprofit working to restore
11 oyster reefs to New York harbor through public
12 education initiatives. I'm here this afternoon to
13 express support for Two Trees proposed River Ring
14 project because of its ambitious goals for habitat
15 restoration and in-water recreation. For the past year
16 and a half we've been working at Domino Park and the
17 River Ring site along with neighborhood organizations
18 and volunteers and with students at M.S. 50 and other
19 local schools and colleges we've installed in our
20 monitoring the growth of 10s of thousands of juvenile
21 oysters with more, millions more to come soon. In a
22 storefront space on Kent Avenue, made available by Two
23 Trees, we host a water quality testing program in

1 which Community volunteers monitor sewage pollution at
2 more than 60 sites up and down the East River and all
3 over the harbor. The data we've collected in both
4 programs will help inform the design of the River Ring
5 projects natural features and evaluate the
6 effectiveness. So why do we support this project?
7 Almost all of the upper harbor and East River
8 shoreline has been hardened or bulk headed, creating
9 an obstacle to both ecological restoration and public
10 access. River Ring's waterfront park design is an
11 attempt to break that mold. It includes two features
12 no private developer has attempted to build before.

13 One is an extensive habitat restoration zone that
14 will include tidal wetlands shallows planted with sub
15 aquatic vegetation and structures to support the
16 restoration of our estuaries, keystone species, the
17 oyster, and other aquatic life. The second feature is
18 a natural edge design that includes a beach a
19 protective breakwater and rerouted combined sewer
20 overflow. Taken together, these innovations will allow
21 for wading, human powered boating, and someday perhaps
22 even swimming. But we have seen at Domino Park is that
23 the neighborhood and the city can greatly benefit from
24 a well-designed and well run waterfront park. We think

1 that the River Ring project will be even better than
2 Domino, creating a new kind of public space where
3 residents and visitors of all ages can get right down
4 to the edge of the harbor see and touch what is living
5 there, and get onto and into the water itself. it's
6 that kind of experience that, more than anything else
7 will help change public perceptions about the harbor
8 and the estuary a key step we believe towards building
9 a more resilient and sustainable city." So thank you
10 so much for the opportunity to speak today, as I said,
11 we are here to speak in support of the River Ring
12 project, that's it for me thanks so much."

13 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thanks very much, Mr. Malinowski
14 asking, are there any questions from the Commission
15 for Mr. Malinowski. Seeing none, I thank you again,
16 and we will move on to Catherina Gioino, to be
17 followed by Katie Horwitz, and Lionel Guy Bremond.
18 sec

19 Catherina Gioino: Thank you for the invitation.
20 Hi there I'm Catherina Gioino. Oh, there you are, hi
21 there. Hi I'm Catherina Gioino speaking in support of
22 the River River project. I'm the head of Community
23 partnerships and advocacy at Oonee, a black and brown

1 owned company operating in Brooklyn that provides free
2 secure bicycle parking and repair services to anyone
3 who needs them. It can't be overstated how highly
4 needed bicycle parking in general, let alone secure
5 is, and just how severely lacking our city
6 infrastructure is meeting that demand. Oonee
7 recognizes the need for all people, regardless of
8 income, professional demographic, to protect their
9 bicycles, from both weather extremities and from
10 theft, which does affect one in four households in New
11 York. That's why I and the Oonne team are in full
12 support of the River Ring project and our partners at
13 Two Trees. I mean not re-explain the resiliency
14 protection that this development will provide to both
15 new coming residents and those passing through on
16 williamsburg's well connected bike lanes. But it will
17 be an understatement to say that the city's push to
18 increase bicycle biking and scootering as a single
19 transportation alternative does neglect the
20 infrastructure that's needed for that increase in
21 demand. This developments promise to bring over 530
22 more secure bicycle parking spaces and we're looking
23 forward to working with the Two Trees team to complete
24 this project, thank you for your time.

1

2 Thank you very much, are there any."

3 Chair Laremont: Thank you very much, are there
4 any questions for Ms. Gioino. If not, thank you again,
5 and we will move on to Katie Horowitz to be followed
6 by Lionel Freeman and Adam Ganser.

7 Katie Denny Horowitz: Hi, good afternoon, can you
8 hear me?

9 Chair Laremont: yeah.

10 Katie Denny Horowitz: Great, thank you. My name
11 is Katie Denny Horowitz. I'm the Executive Director of
12 the North Brooklyn Parks Alliance and we're a
13 nonprofit community organization that was founded
14 around the 2005 Greenpoint Williamsburg waterfront
15 rezoning as the neighborhood's parks conservancy.
16 Today, our stated mission is to create an equitable,
17 accessible, and vibrant parks and open space system
18 here in North Brooklyn. And it's with this mission in
19 mind that I'm here today to testify in support of
20 River Ring and it's resilient and environmentally
21 innovative design approach to the Williamsburg
22 waterfront. North Brooklyn as you might know is

1 historically underserved when it comes to parks and
2 the vast majority of city parkland promised through
3 the 2005 rezoning has yet to be created. The River
4 Ring proposal adds six new acres of publicly
5 accessible park and open space that is explicitly
6 designed to engage, educate, and inspire New Yorkers
7 to embrace our waterways, which our environmentally
8 active community considers open space, as well as
9 land. This project will restore salt marshes,
10 wetlands, oyster beds, tidal flats, enriching wildlife
11 and habitat while creating new protected areas for
12 recreation and environmental education. Its
13 development also moves us closer to the cities and our
14 communities efforts to create a continuous and
15 accessible green space, which Terry discussed, along
16 Brooklyn's waterfront helping to fulfill a master plan
17 that our community has vigorously demanded for more
18 than a generation. In addition to the proposed park
19 Two Trees, has been a long standing leader in our
20 community for the creation, maintenance and
21 programming of park space, most notably with the
22 area's beloved Domino Park where Two Trees has
23 established a reputation for high quality maintenance
24 and depth of community engagement that offers a strong

1 model for urban parks everywhere. The park proposes
2 part of River Ring goes further, a first of its kind
3 public waterfront park. The proposal can also set an
4 important precedent as we confront climate change and
5 continued environmental challenges issues made even
6 more clear with the recent devastation of Hurricane
7 Ida designed to evolve with climate change and reduce
8 the impacts of a rising river, the project will
9 feature berms, breakwaters, marshes, wetlands. All
10 designed to take the energy out of storm surges we've
11 recently seen in New York, hopefully, reducing
12 flooding and erosion and better protecting our North
13 Brooklyn waterfront. On a personal note I've lived in
14 the North Brooklyn community for 20 years where I'm
15 raising my two sons and I've been working for local
16 and citywide parks organizations for most of that
17 time. And I have to say that the proposed park is
18 brilliant with unparalleled opportunity for community
19 engagement. New Yorkers should expect more of
20 development, and for that matter of developers, and
21 River Ring is an example that such expectations can be
22 met, thank you for allowing me to testify today.

1 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thanks very much. Are there any
2 questions for Ms. Horowitz? If not, I thank you again,
3 and our next speaker will be Lionel Guy Bremond.

4 Co-Host: Lionel is not in the room.

5 CHAIR LAREMONT: Okay, then our next speaker will
6 be Adam Ganser to be followed by Michael Kowachka and
7 Megan Rickerson.

8 Host (Ryan Singer): I don't see Mr. Ganser in the
9 room correct.

10 CHAIR LAREMONT: Okay.

11 Co-Host: Can unmute his mic if he is able to.

12 Host (Ryan Singer): Mr. Kowachka?

13 Michael Kawochka: Yes, sir."

14 Host (Ryan Singer): Yeah, let's go with you.

15 Michael Kawochka: Excellent. All right, good
16 morning or Good afternoon, Commissioners, my name is
17 Michael Kawochka and I'm a fourth generation
18 Greenpointer. I volunteer on the Greenpoint YMCA
19 board. The P.S. 110 PTA and the Community Board One
20 Land Use Committee that deliberated this project.
21 Through various public hearings, it is increasingly

1 clear there is strong, diverse community support for
2 the affordable housing included in this project, as
3 well as the park, the new Y[MCA], and the job creation
4 that will be generated. Project supporters outnumber
5 opponents at each of our public hearings. And I found
6 that the vast majority of opposition to the River Ring
7 is coming from immediate neighbors to the site,
8 specifically the condo buildings at Northside Piers,
9 184 Kent, 80 Metro, 330 Wythe, where residents may
10 experience negative impacts on the waterfront views.
11 Currently neighbors enjoy uninterrupted views over the
12 site, which is vacant, except for a few interim uses.
13 The folks that insist that the site remain zoned
14 manufacturing are being disingenuous. They would
15 really just prefer that nothing gets developed there.

16 The truth is this site on Williamsburg's Gold
17 Coast will never remain vacant. It is far too valuable
18 as a potential residential site that includes hundreds
19 of affordable apartments or even with this existing
20 zoning which can be used for big box retail,
21 distribution, and last mile delivery. We all know that
22 the Two Trees proposal can be improved upon, that is
23 what this process is for. So we can give our input and
24 recommendations to maximize the community benefits

1 from any development on the site. In my mind the mix
2 of affordable housing, park space, and community
3 facilities, like the YMCA in the Two Trees proposal
4 does just that urge you to approve the proposal with
5 workable conditions that can ensure that the site can
6 actually be developed with the Community benefits that
7 are being proposed, thank you.

8 CHAIR LAREMONT: Thank you, are there any
9 questions for Mr. Kowachka? If not, I thank you
10 again, and we will move on to Megan Rickerson to be
11 followed by Eric Huntley and Brian Rodriguez.

12 Co-Host: And Eric, Megan, and Brian are not in
13 the room.

14 Chair Laremont: Okay. Then the next speaker would
15 be Andy McDowell followed by Marva Babel and Henry
16 Rodriguez.

17 Andy McDowell: Testing testing.

18 Host (Ryan Singer): Yeah, we can hear you.

19 Andy McDowell: Okay, great alright. Well, first
20 of all thank you for letting me speak, and second, of
21 all I wanted to thank Two Trees, for an excellent
22 presentation. And uh you know I'm speaking in support

1 of the CB One recommendations. I wanted to say that I
2 feel like Two Trees, is an excellent developer. It's
3 exceedingly rare that developers put as much care into
4 architecture and planning as this company does, and so
5 you know within that framework, you know they're an
6 exceptional company. The bigger issue here is - you
7 know what's happening to our waterfront, you know, by
8 and large, and the results of the 2005 rezoning which
9 ultimately is a travesty, it's a kind of a giveaway
10 that has allowed what will be almost a wall to be
11 built along our waterfront and the mandated green
12 space amounts to like a thin green carpet along the
13 edge. And if you've ever been to Domino Park on a
14 weekend it's beautiful and the design is excellent,
15 but it's wall to wall people, like you, it's not
16 really that relaxing, it's more like being in like a
17 like a outdoor version of a nightclub or something
18 like that. And so my feeling is that the city could
19 exercise more leverage. I feel like the city has
20 enough leverage to get more for its citizens, then
21 what might amount to 105 like actually affordable
22 apartments. And I don't know if you've looked at rents
23 of like quote unquote, you know, below market housing,
24 but a two bedroom apartment might be \$7,000 or \$6,000,

1 rents that I don't know many people who could afford
2 and that's the below market figure on a lot of these.
3 So I feel like as much as it would be great to have
4 this incredible park and this really kind of seductive
5 feature which also extends into the water, because if
6 you took those giant towers without the extra park it
7 would it would squeeze right up to the edge of the
8 water. So I do think that the city should rethink how
9 easily it gives away our sky. And I do think there's a
10 lot of people in the community, even if they're not
11 aware of all these meetings, who are very bummed out
12 about how many tall buildings and potentially really
13 tall buildings are being proposed on our waterfront.
14 So do you have the power to slow this down.

15 Andy McDowell: Do I get to keep going?

16 Host (Ryan Singer): Ah, if you're concluded, Vice
17 Chair, I believe the Chair has stepped away for a
18 moment, if you can take over the running the meeting
19 we'll assist you with that."

20 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Okay, okay other questions
21 for Mr. McDowell. If not, thank you, Mr. McDowell for
22 your remarks. Our next speaker?

1 Host (Ryan Singer): Marva Babel has signed up
2 followed by Henry Rodriguez.

3 Co-Host: Marva is not in the room.

4 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Mr. Rodriguez?

5 Host (Ryan Singer): There we go, we have him here
6 let's try and get them unmuted."

7 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Okay.

8 Host (Ryan Singer): Mr. Rodriguez be able to
9 unmute. Having some technical difficulties, we can
10 reach out and we'll move on.

11 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Yeah, move on. Come back.

12 Host (Ryan Singer): Oh, I believe that Juana De
13 Jesus had already spoken in our, yes, and so Jose Ray
14 Acosta, oh, Henry, Mr Rodriguez we can hear you now.
15 You can speak now Mr. Rodriguez. Mr. Rodriguez?
16 Alright, I'm not sure if he's paying attention. We'll
17 move on.

18 Host (Ryan Singer): We have a William Meehan was
19 signed up to speak.

20 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Mr. Meehan?

21 Host (Ryan Singer): There we go.

1 William Meehan: Hi, can you hear me?

2 Host (Ryan Singer): Yes.

3 William Meehan: Great, thank you. My name is
4 William. My boyfriend and I lived on Metropolitan
5 Avenue near the proposed development for several years
6 And I'm asking the Commission to support River Ring
7 without reducing the size of the building. The
8 community benefits of this project are huge, but the
9 housing alone is hugely important. New York has severe
10 shortage and with people moving back after COVID, it's
11 only getting worse. The market rate for my two bedroom
12 went up \$700 a month from 2022 to 2021, forcing me to
13 move out, despite being relatively well-off and
14 there's plenty who are, you know, have already had to
15 move out years ago because of rent going up for them.
16 North Williamsburg has very few apartments that are
17 affordable at 40% AMI and it's great that River Ring
18 would provide those permanently. I think the
19 Commission should support a larger number of
20 affordable units, especially at lower AMIs, but not at
21 the expense of the building size, given the
22 neighborhood context, the proposed rezoning is more
23 than reasonable. I actually think the Commission

1 should consider approving see C6-4 zoning without
2 parking if we're able to get a couple more hundred
3 affordable units out of it. And the Commission has
4 talked and heard a lot about planning for climate
5 change today. To that end, I think the Commission
6 should request the Two Trees eliminate car parking on
7 the site. Car parking induces car ownership, which,
8 induces car driving and we can't have that for climate
9 friendly city. There are already two parking garages
10 cross the street so eliminating parking does not
11 actually impede car access. Residents who move here
12 could easily take the L train where the MTA is adding
13 20% capacity, which is about an extra 8,000 people per
14 hour. To replace the car parking, I would like to Two
15 Trees to expand their proposed partnership with Oonee
16 to provide more secure by parking instead. Thank you
17 please approve the project.

18 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Thank you, Mr. Meehan.
19 Questions? Thank you, sir.

20 Host (Ryan Singer): My intel is that we have
21 Megan Rickerson back in the room, she has called
22 previously.

23 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Ms. Rickerseon?

1 Megan Rickerson: I'm for restaurants, I signed up
2 for I would I would come at one o'clock.

3 Host (Ryan Singer): Okay, that's okay, we'll get
4 you in the room. Sorry about that.

5 Host (Ryan Singer): Alright.

6 Host (Ryan Singer): The next speaker. The next
7 speaker signed up is June Ramirez.

8 Co-Host: Jume is not in the room.

9 Host (Ryan Singer): Rosangel Pere?

10 Co-Host: Rose is also not in the room.

11 Host (Ryan Singer): And then finally, we have the
12 last speaker, we have signed up for this item right
13 now is Lori Raphael.

14 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Ms. Raphael?

15 Host (Ryan Singer): Do we have her in the room?

16 Host (Ryan Singer): She appears to.

17 Lori Raphael: Good afternoon.

18 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Good afternoon. Please
19 proceed.

1 Lori Raphael: Thank you, my name is Lori Raphael
2 and I'm a Senior Vice President at the Brooklyn
3 Chamber of Commerce and I'm speaking in full support
4 of the River Ring project. River Ring project
5 addresses the borough's need for additional housing of
6 all types, with 313 affordable units, 25 percent of
7 the total, and with 30,000 square feet of neighborhood
8 retail, six acres of waterfront park, resiliency
9 infrastructure, and waterfront educational
10 opportunities. We view this project as a contextual
11 and welcome addition to the Williamsburg waterfront.
12 Two Trees has consistently offered well-designed
13 projects that meet a wide range of the needs of the
14 communities in which they build. In addition to
15 affordable housing, the project will create 506
16 permanent jobs and over 2,000 construction jobs. This
17 is a significant amount of job creation in our post
18 pandemic economy. The site is designed for storm
19 resiliency, which is an increasingly necessary measure
20 to protect against flooding, as we address the effects
21 of climate change. Sustainable features include an
22 infrastructure that will not rely on or in any way
23 burden the city sewer, stormwater, or electrical grid.
24 Two Trees has made every effort in its design to

1 maximize the affordable housing, build density
2 compatible to the surrounding neighborhood and to find
3 unique architectural and design solutions to site
4 conditions and constraints. The site opens up and
5 improves connectivity to the waterfront for the
6 community and all Brooklynites and represents a model
7 for sustainable waterfront design with minimal impact
8 to existing infrastructure. The Brooklyn Chamber of
9 Commerce is in full support of the River Ring project
10 and it's positive economic, community, and
11 environmental equity benefits, thank you.

12 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Thank you, questions for Ms.
13 Raphael? Thank you very much.

14 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Ryan, are there any further
15 speakers on this item?

16 Host (Ryan Singer): Let me update the, refresh
17 the speed on this one. No that appears to be the final
18 speaker on this item. See. Yes, that's the last
19 speaker on this item.

20 Vice-Chair Knuckles: So the hearing is therefore
21 closed.

1 Host (Ryan Singer): Yes. And I know that there is
2 a DEIS on this, and so, if Mr. Secretary you could
3 read the appropriate language on that. I do not have
4 it right in front of me right now.

5 Mister Secretary: Absolutely. Good afternoon Mr.
6 Vice Chairman. Because there is a DEIS that is under
7 review currently, or parallel with the ULURP
8 application that was heard today. The comment record
9 for the DEIS will remain open for 10 days. The public
10 comment period will remain open until October 18 2021
11 so anyone wishing to submit written comments may do
12 so.

13 Vice-Chair Knuckles: Thank you.