



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

VICKI L. BEEN  
DEPUTY MAYOR FOR HOUSING AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

January 10, 2020

Council Member Antonio Reynoso  
Council Member Rafael Espinal  
Bushwick Community Plan Steering Committee  
Robert Camacho, Chairperson, Brooklyn Community Board 4  
Celestina Leon, District Manager, Brooklyn Community Board 4

**Re: Bushwick Rezoning DEIS Alternatives Analysis Scenario Request**

Dear Bushwick stakeholders:

I am responding to your letter received on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to Mayor Bill de Blasio requesting that the zoning framework outlined in the Bushwick Community Plan be analyzed as an alternative in the City's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Bushwick Neighborhood Plan.

Since 2014, the Bushwick Community Plan Steering Committee, Community Board 4, Council Members Antonio Reynoso and Rafael Espinal, and City agencies have participated in a collaborative planning process to achieve our shared goals of keeping Bushwick affordable, diverse, and equitable while addressing out-of-character development. This planning process culminated in the Steering Committee publishing the 2018 Bushwick Community Plan, which informed the City's 2019 Bushwick Neighborhood Plan, a comprehensive plan for the neighborhood.

However, in reviewing your request, I am deeply concerned that the Bushwick Community Plan calls for "No more total units than the no-action scenario would produce, unless those additional units are deeply affordable." This approach is fundamentally a downzoning. It would reduce density significantly in many areas while spurring the creation of few new homes, deeply affordable or otherwise, in others. These

outcomes run counter to the City's goals of the rezoning, which would be to encourage new mixed-income housing to prevent displacement spurred by current market forces while promoting a diverse, healthy, and inclusive neighborhood and city. For this reason, the City does not support the inclusion of the Bushwick Community Plan in our environmental review.

Affordability concerns in Bushwick are linked to the neighborhood's and the city's significant population and economic growth over the last two decades. This overall growth has driven an increase in the demand for housing and need for jobs, local retail, and services--citywide and in Bushwick. The housing market in Bushwick responded to neighborhood growth with over 6,600 new, primarily market-rate, housing units from 2000-2018.<sup>1</sup> But currently there are few zoning incentives or requirements for permanent affordable housing in new developments. To address this underlying housing need, the Bushwick Neighborhood Plan is designed to preserve and create permanently affordable housing, prevent displacement spurred by current market forces, channel housing growth to appropriate locations with supporting infrastructure, promote the growth of jobs, businesses, and local services, and identify neighborhood investment opportunities. By reducing density below current levels, the Bushwick Community Plan does not provide the necessary density to spur housing and job growth near transit, preventing the use of zoning provisions to require the development of new permanently affordable housing.

To achieve the goal of a more affordable and inclusive Bushwick, a balanced approach that identifies areas appropriate for maintaining existing character *and* those appropriate for increasing the housing supply are needed. All New Yorkers deserve equal access to housing opportunities and the Administration is committed to helping New Yorkers stay in their homes while meeting a citywide need to create new housing to meet increased demand.

Sincerely,



Vicki L. Been  
Deputy Mayor, City of New York

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<sup>1</sup> Of the units constructed in the last two decades, approximately 25% (1,609) were affordable, primarily due to subsidized housing construction on large city-owned sites, such as Rheingold Gardens and the former Rheingold brewery. Certificates of Occupancy for new construction in Community District 4, 2000-2018; NYC Department of Buildings records; DCP HEIP Division (March 2019).