



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

March 14, 2016

Melissa Mark-Viverito  
Speaker, New York City Council  
New York City Hall  
250 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Viverito:

I write to you today to express my concern regarding the East New York Community Plan ("the Plan"), and urge the City Council to consider altering or amending the Plan in order to alleviate its impact on vulnerable populations.

The East New York/Cypress Hill area of Brooklyn is the first of fifteen neighborhoods targeted for re-zoning and re-development by Mayor deBlasio's Administration as part of its on-going effort to address our City's affordable housing crisis. The Plan is designed as a comprehensive neighborhood plan to promote affordable housing preservation and development, encourage economic development, create pedestrian-friendly streets, and introduce new community resources to support the long-term growth and sustainability of the community.

While the overall goals of the Plan are both necessary and worthwhile goals, I have concerns about the Plan's impact on the community, its residents, and its businesses. I am concerned that the Plan would create too few below market rate apartments and too few of those apartments would be affordable for current residents. I am also concerned that the Plan will allow for the influx of luxury developments that will increase local housing and commercial rents, thereby, causing the community to become unaffordable for many current residents and businesses.

We have seen this type of situation play-out before. In neighborhoods like Williamsburg and Bushwick the re-zoning of those areas provoked gentrification and displacement of the neighborhoods' residents. Today, as a result of this re-zoning, half the manufacturing jobs have disappeared from those neighborhoods and less than 15 percent of the area's total housing is affordable.


The re-zonings of Williamsburg and Bushwick have left the residents of East New York and Cypress Hill understandably concerned about the impact the Plan will have on their community. We cannot allow a situation like what happened in Williamsburg and Bushwick to play-out in East New York and Cypress Hill.

As the Administration and the City Council look to re-zone the neighborhoods of East New York and Cypress Hill, any re-zoning plan that is finally adopted must provide an integrated approach to change and must meet the stated needs and priorities of the community's residents and businesses. In this regard, any such plan must include the creation of housing that meets the affordability levels of the community's current residents, provide protections to guard against residential displacement, create living wage jobs, and facilitate the preservation of community's local retail businesses on commercial corridors.

While I emphasize that the Administration's goals for the Plan are admirable, we must all work to address the concerns raised by the community's residents and businesses. Long-time residents and businesses of East New York and Cypress Hill have invested many years into the growth and development of their neighborhood and the neighborhood has long been considered a "neighborhood of opportunity." We must not lose the tremendous strides made in this community.

Therefore, I urge that before the Plan's final adoption, the City Council consider altering or amending the Plan in order to address the Plan's impact on vulnerable populations and ensure it meets the stated needs and priorities of the community's residents and businesses.

Sincerely Yours,



Nydia Velázquez  
Member of Congress