



September 22, 2020

New York City Council  
250 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Council Members:

As representatives of Sunset Park's working waterfront and other Brooklyn neighborhoods, we write to express our opposition to the Industry City rezoning proposal.

Last March, a number of us wrote to the City Planning Commission raising concerns about such a large private rezoning application that would further exacerbate real estate pressures, displacement, rising rents, and forever shift the nature of the waterfront away from one of the few remaining manufacturing hubs to commercial tourism and service economy. This would undermine Brooklyn's industrial position, and it would supercharge the displacement and gentrification that is undermining Sunset Park's affordability and blue-collar job base.

The City's Land Use Review Procedure is not the place where real planning occurs. In many instances, developers endeavor to dictate terms to neighborhood residents even though the public is being asked to make a momentous public land use decision with far-reaching impacts. The pressures in that kind of process are chiefly transactional, with inadequate community input and consideration of what is the right fit for impacted neighborhoods.

Some in your body have announced their support for Industry City's rezoning, despite the views of the local Council Member and the community. Unfortunately, they appear to have done so while knowing little about the countless hours of work undertaken by the Sunset Park community and Community Board to study and debate it. ULURP should come after a community negotiation process, not ahead of it. What the Sunset Park community has made clear is rezoning such a large portion of the waterfront for a single private actor is not in the best interests of the residents.

Moreover, Industry City does not need a rezoning to bring jobs. In 2013, Industry City said they could only bring 5,000 jobs with private investment alone. Today, they are touting the over 8,000 jobs without rezoning. With one million square feet of property still vacant and undeveloped, and another 1.5 million in storage, they can bring thousands more jobs without public accommodation.

Rather than cede leadership to a private developer forging ahead with their application, the City should take the initiative to reassess the economic environment, its manufacturing needs (particularly with the new mandates in recently passed climate acts), the needs of the local community for jobs, and the future of the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Business Zone.

With the pandemic devastating our most vulnerable communities, and the ensuing economic recession hitting working class New Yorkers hardest – particularly immigrant families – it is even more important now that we give our constituents more, not less influence in how we rebuild and restore their lives and livelihoods.

We are committed to ensuring that the local community can drive the process of what is in their best interest. We urge you to support this community by respecting the decision of the local City Council Member who represents their interests, prioritize the well-being and livelihoods of the residents and small businesses, and refrain from moving forward with approving the project.

Sincerely,

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

Hakeem Jeffries  
Member of Congress

Zellnor Y. Myrie  
State Senator

Julia Salazar  
State Senator

Jo Anne Simon  
State Assemblymember

Robert C. Carroll  
State Assemblymember

Diana C. Richardson  
State Assemblymember

Latrice Walker  
State Assemblymember

cc: Mayor Bill de Blasio  
Council Member Carlos Menchaca  
Brooklyn Community Board 7 Chair Cesar Zuñiga