

Saving our community from over-development!

For everyone who lives and works in Long Island City, Sunnyside, and Astoria, the threat of luxury development is looming. We all see the tall glass towers being built in our communities, and we all know that most of us can't afford to live in them. We see the shiny new office buildings, and know that the jobs provided are not for us. We see our mom & pop stores being priced out by sky-high rents, along with manufacturers—with their good-paying jobs—and working artists, musicians and dancers, who are being priced out by high rents in our industrial zones. At the same time, our subways are packed, and we have very little green space to enjoy. We say NO to any development that is not built for us, the existing communities of western Queens! We demand zoning, housing, parks and transportation that serve our human needs, not built for the profit of real estate developers.

Here are three proposals on the table that will drastically increase luxury housing in western Queens:

1- The Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX) is a streetcar that would run along the waterfront of Astoria and Long Island City all the way through Brooklyn, ending in Sunset Park. This streetcar will cost at least \$2.5 billion, and is the brainchild of real estate developers to increase their property values. The BQX would change our Queens waterfront into a wall of glass towers, and would cause surrounding rents to rise dramatically. In addition, the fare for the BQX would likely cost \$2.75 in addition to the base metrocard fare, which most residents of our communities cannot afford. Creating new bus lanes would cost a fraction of the amount, and wouldn't usher in overdevelopment.

2 - Sunnyside Yards: this development requires an enormous 3-story platform to be built over the train yards behind Northern Boulevard near Queens Plaza. Dozens of giant towers would loom over our neighborhood, essentially creating a new neighborhood, consisting of 24,000 additional housing units -- the vast majority of which will be unaffordable to current working class residents of Queens.

3 - Long Island City rezoning: As we have seen, the original LIC rezoning under mayor Bloomberg resulted in 13,000 residential units built or under construction, of which only about 650 are affordable. In addition, the many shiny new office towers and hotels caused rents to rise in the manufacturing zones. This new LIC rezoning will be more of the same, creating even more luxury development, with no real provisions for the people who already live and work in LIC.

What do we, the community, want?

Truly affordable housing: we need existing affordable housing, such as our NYCHA developments, to be well maintained and cared for. Let's improve the housing for folks who already live here! And any new housing that is built must have a majority of units that are truly affordable to our community: the rents should be pegged to what most people in the area can actually afford.

Green space: we need more parks to relax and play in!

Save our mom & pop stores, and keep commercial rents affordable for jobs-producing manufacturers and artists! We need to pass the Small Business Jobs Survival Act (in the city council), which would give lease protection to small business and prevent rents from skyrocketing.

Publicly-owned land should be kept public! We say no to private development, or "infill," on our NYCHA properties: we need to protect our playgrounds and green space, and keep all NYCHA land 100% affordable. No public buildings, parks or plots of land should be given away to for-profit real estate developers: they should either be developed by not-for-profit groups, with 100% affordable rents, or should be made into community land trusts, in which people from the community actually own, manage and control the land.

Transportation that works, for the community. The BQX trolley doesn't serve the transportation needs of western Queens residents: we need more fast and frequent buses, and improved subway service. Bringing in tens of thousands of new residents will only crowd our subways more. Instead of spending \$2.5 billion on a streetcar, we should be upgrading the switch system in our subways so they can run more frequently, with fewer delays.

Get involved: The Justice for All Coalition is developing a Community Plan for our neighborhood, which works for us, not just real estate developers. Get involved by emailing us at jfcoalition@gmail.com, visiting our website at j4ac.us, or message us on the Justice for All Coalition Facebook page: www.facebook.com/J4AC.US.