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NEW YORK CITY ECONOMOIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
&
THE NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
CITYWIDE ADMINSTRATIVE SERVICES

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VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

RE: KINGSBRIDGE ARMORY PROJECT

-----X

February 11th, 2025

4:00 p.m.

B E F O R E:

ESTHER BRUNNER,
THE CHAIR, MOEC

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Good afternoon. My name is Esther Brunner and I will be -- I will be chairing today's scoping meeting. As lead agency, the Deputy Mayor's office is overseeing the preparation and completion of an Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, for the Kingsbridge Armory proposal. Please note that this meeting is being recorded.

I would like to start with just a few notes before we begin. Only presenters are required to share their video on this call. For the best viewing experience, we are recommending that all participants enable the feature that allows you to show only the participants with a video. These first two screens provide instructions on how to do that.

This screen is for those who wish to view the meeting with American Sign Language interpretation.

This screen explains the options you have for providing comments on the draft scope of work.

If you signed up to speak before

1

2 the meeting, during the registration process, we
3 have your name and you will be called during the
4 testimony portion of this meeting. If you did not
5 sign up to speak before the start of the meeting
6 but would like to speak, please identify yourself
7 using the raise hand function on Zoom.

8 Instructions for this are being shown on your
9 screen right now and will be shown periodically
10 during the meeting.

11 If you are joining by phone only,
12 you may dial *9 to indicate your desire to provide
13 verbal testimony. Participants using the raise
14 hand function or *9 will be added to the end of the
15 speaker list. The option to sign up to speak will
16 end at approximately 7:30 p.m. I will give you a
17 minute to read the instructions before I move on.
18 Again, these instructions will appear periodically
19 during this meeting.

20 Today, we are here to receive your
21 comments on the draft scope of work for the
22 Environmental Impact Statement for the Kingsbridge
23 Armory development proposal. The draft scope of
24 work identifies all the subjects that will be
25 analyzed in the upcoming EIS and explains how those

1

2 subjects will be studied. The draft scope is
3 available on the CEQR Access website. The required
4 notices advertising this meeting were published in
5 The City Record and El Diario on January 10th,
6 2025, and in the New York Post on January 11th,
7 2025, and in the New York State Environmental
8 Notice Bulletin on January 15th, 2025.

9 The purpose of today's scoping
10 meeting is to allow for public participation in the
11 preparation of the EIS at the earliest stage
12 possible. Toward that end, the lead agency will
13 have an opportunity to receive comments on the
14 draft scope from elected officials, government
15 agencies, community board representatives, and
16 members of the public.

17 We also welcome written comments
18 on the draft scope of work. Written comments can
19 be submitted through Friday, February 28th, 2025,
20 to the following email address,
21 ebrunner@cityhall.nyc.gov.

22 At the end of the written comment
23 period, the lead agency will review all comments,
24 those we hear today, as well as written comments
25 we've received. Comments received will be

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2 considered and incorporated and responded to as
3 appropriate in the final scope of work. It is the
4 final scope of work that will serve as the basis
5 for preparing the draft EIS. Please note that
6 there will be a public hearing for this project
7 after the draft EIS is issued.

8 Today's scoping meeting marks the
9 beginning of the public environmental review
10 process for the Kingsbridge Armory development
11 proposal. No decisions will be made today
12 regarding the draft scope of work. The purpose of
13 the meeting is to allow the public to provide their
14 comments about the draft scope of work, and to
15 allow the lead agency to listen to those comments.
16 It's important for all voices to be heard today.

17 I'd like to focus on the structure
18 of today's meeting, which is going to be divided
19 into three parts.

20 During the first part, the
21 applicant team will give a brief overview
22 describing the proposal, the proposed actions, and
23 the draft scope of work.

24 During the second part of the
25 meeting, we will be receiving comments on the draft

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2 scope, from elected officials, government agencies,
3 and community board representatives.

4

5 During the third and final part of
6 the meeting, the lead agency will receive comments
7 from the general public. The meeting will end only
8 when everyone who has signed up to provide
9 testimony has had a chance to be heard.

10

11 On to a few logistics for today's
12 scoping meeting. The protocol is intended to
13 ensure that everyone has a chance to speak and all
14 voices can be heard. If you wish to speak and plan
15 to access the meeting online using a computer, or
16 tablet, or smartphone, please remember to register
17 online at <https://bit.ly/kingsbridge-scoping>. A
18 link to join us and provide your testimony will be
19 emailed to you after you have completed the
20 registration process, we will then add you to our
21 speaker's list.

22

23 When it is your turn to speak,
24 your name will be called, and you will be allowed
25 to un-mute your microphone. Please note that
26 promoting speakers can take some time, so we ask
27 that everyone is patient. Once your name has been
28 called and you have unmuted your microphone, you

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2 will be asked to convey your remarks.

3

4 To allow us to hear from everyone
5 who wishes to speak, we ask you to please limit
6 your remarks to three minutes. At the three-minute
7 mark, your time will expire. At that time, you
8 will be asked to conclude your remarks. There are
9 a few exceptions to the three-minute time limit.
10 Elected officials, for example, are given courtesy
11 of jumping to the front of the queue and are not
12 limited to three minutes. If you choose to turn on
13 your camera, we will be able to see you.

14

15 An additional note of instructions
16 for those of you joining us by phone today. If
17 joining by phone, dial +1 646 558 8656, and enter
18 the meeting ID number, which is 82550637752. If
19 you wish to provide testimony via telephone, please
20 select *9 to raise your hand. Please listen for me
21 to call out the last three digits of your phone
22 number. At that point, you will be given the
23 temporary ability to share your testimony.

24

25 You must press *9 to unmute your
26 telephone, and we will be able to hear you speak.
27 When your testimony is complete or your three
28 minutes have expired, whichever comes first, you

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2 must press *6 again to mute yourself. We would
3 like to encourage dial-in participants who wish to
4 provide testimony to register via phone using the
5 dial-in participant hotline.

6 Please note that muting and
7 unmuting registered speakers may take a moment. We
8 ask for your patience with this process.

9 Before we begin the testimony
10 portion of this meeting to hear your comments, we
11 will hear from David Suckewer from New York City
12 EDC; Maya Hatcher from MADDD Equities, and; Jaclyn
13 Scarinci from Akerman, representing the applicants
14 for the proposed project, followed by Charlie
15 Fields of AKRF, the consultant supporting the lead
16 agency in the preparation of the project's
17 environmental impact statement.

18 I would now like to introduce
19 Daniel Suckewer, from New York City, EDC, who will
20 provide a brief description of the proposed
21 project. If you are joining us on your computer or
22 via the Zoom app, you will see the presentation on
23 your screen as he speaks.

24 MR. SUCKEWER: Thank you for the
25 introduction, Esther. Hello, my name is Daniel

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2 Suckewer and I'm a Vice President at New York
3 City's Economic Development Corporation. As EDCs
4 representative at today's meeting, I will cover
5 this selection process for the Kingsbridge Armory
6 redevelopment.

7

We begin with the Armory.

8 Constructed over a hundred years ago, the Armory is
9 an historic landmark building situated in the heart
10 of Kingsbridge Heights. It served as the base for
11 the New York National Guard's eighth Regiment from
12 its opening in 1917 up through the 1950s. The
13 Armory was officially designated a New York City
14 landmark in 1974 and was added to the New York
15 State and national registers of historic places in
16 1982. In 1996, the Armory was transferred to the
17 city of New York. While the National Guard vacated
18 the Armory building, it still currently uses two
19 buildings, both constructed in the 1950s just north
20 of the Armory.

21

22 Since assuming control of the
23 Armory almost 30 years ago, the city has made two
24 other attempts; in 2008, and then in 2013 to
25 redevelop the property, both of which were
unsuccessful. In October 2022, EDC launched the

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2 Together for Kingsbridge community vision process
3 in close coordination with elected officials and
4 community leaders. Over the course of nine months,
5 input was gathered from a series of public
6 workshops, town halls, small group discussions,
7 school presentations, weekly office hours, tours,
8 and online information sessions.

9 The vision plan's release was
10 accompanied by the announcement of \$200 million in
11 public funding, split evenly between the city and
12 State towards the renovation of the Armory. An
13 additional \$15 million in public funds have since
14 been committed to the project. \$12 million from
15 Council Member Sanchez, \$2 million from Borough
16 President Gibson, and a \$1 million federal grant
17 secured by Congress Member Espaillat.

18 The vision plan focused on seven
19 guiding principles detailed in this slide:
20 Prioritization of youth; creating jobs and building
21 wealth for existing workers and communities; serve
22 as a welcome space for older adults; regrow a
23 regenerative local economy; put Bronx on the map;
24 foster intergenerational relationships, and;
25 maximize community ownership. The vision plan

1

2 identified both priority and complimentary uses for
3 the Armory.

4

Potential industries that can meet
5 the priority uses included: film and TV production;
6 sustainable manufacturing; emerging technologies;
7 and urban agriculture.

8

For complimentary uses, potential
9 program elements included: retail, food and
10 beverage; space for community gathering and
11 organization; Bronx Arts and culture space;
12 recreation and health uses, and; sustainable food
13 systems.

14

Shortly after the release of the
15 vision plan, EDC issued an RFP soliciting proposals
16 for a financially feasible mixed-use development
17 that would activate the armory, enhance the
18 neighborhood, serve a diverse group of people and
19 users, and deliver a minimum of 25,000 square feet
20 of discounted space for community-based
21 organizations. Following an in-depth review of
22 proposals in January 2025, EDC announced this
23 election of 8th Regimen Partners LLC, a developer
24 team led by MADDD Equities.

25

And now I'll hand the presentation

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2 over to Maya Hatcher from Maya -- from MADDD
3 Equities to introduce herself.

4 MS. HATCHER: Thank you, Daniel,
5 for the introduction. Good evening, everyone. My
6 name is Maya Hatcher of MADDD Equities, the
7 Development Principal of 8th Regiment Partners LLC.
8 We are honored to have been selected to bring a
9 long-awaited vision for the KingsBridge Armory to
10 life, with the plan that delivers on what the
11 community deserves while maintaining long-term
12 financial stability.

13 We, together with EDC, are
14 committed to a development program and timeline
15 that achieves the goal of the Together for
16 Kingsbridge vision plan.

17 Revitalizing Kingsbridge Armory is
18 a challenge that we're uniquely suited to handle,
19 given our proven track record in affordable
20 housing, adaptive reuse, historic preservation,
21 commercial development, and our extensive work
22 throughout the Bronx.

23 MADDD Equities is a full-service
24 MBE real estate development firm, with expertise in
25 development, construction, and asset management.

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MADDD Equities has developed and constructed over 5 million square feet of housing, including approximately 2 million square feet of commercial with extensive work in the Bronx. And have developed over and managed 4,000 units of affordable housing, and 1 million square feet of commercial space with a total investment near 1 billion.

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We -- you may be a little familiar with a few of our projects. 2530 Grand Concourse, 375 West 207th Street, and 3170 West -- sorry, Webster Avenue. I would now like to introduce Jaclyn Scarinci, partner with Akerman LLP, to provide an overview of the development proposal and discretionary actions we are sorting.

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MS. SCARINCI: Thanks, Maya. My name is Jacqueline Scarinci of Akerman, (unintelligible) Counsel to 8th Regiment Partners LLC. The Kingsbridge Armory is located in the Kingsbridge Heights neighborhood of Bronx Community District 7. The site is comprised of two tax lots: lots 2, and 10, on tax block 3, 2, 4, 7. The site has a lot area of approximately 245,600 square feet, and is bounded by Jerome Avenue to the east,

1

2 West Kingsbridge Road to the south, Reservoir
3 Avenue to the west, and West 195th Street to the
4 north.

5 The site is located immediately
6 adjacent to the Kingsbridge Road 4 subway on Jerome
7 Avenue. The site is improved with three buildings,
8 including the approximately 588,765-row square foot
9 armory building, as well as two buildings with a
10 total of approximately 26,000 square feet utilized
11 by the New York National Guard.

12 The proposed development will
13 transform this underutilized site into a new
14 mixed-use community development with new affordable
15 housing, retail, and community facility
16 opportunities while creating a new pedestrian
17 experience with publicly accessible open space.

18 As currently contemplated, the
19 program is expected to feature up to 500 units of
20 new permanently affordable housing and
21 approximately 13,000-person live event venue and up
22 to 550 parking spaces, commercial spaces for
23 economic development and jobs, community and
24 recreational spaces, an educational facility
25 focused on workforce development, cultural space

1

2 with a focus on Bronx -- on the Bronx community,
3 approximately 48,000 square feet of public open
4 space, tech sector manufacturing space, youth
5 sports fields and academies.

6 The proposed development will
7 involve the adaptive reuse of the existing Armory
8 structure, as well as the redevelopment of the
9 National Guard site with a new mixed-use building.
10 The interior of the Armory will be retrofitted to
11 accommodate the proposed live event space,
12 community and recreational spaces, educational
13 facility, cultural space, manufacturing space, and
14 parking.

15 It is anticipated that the
16 National Guard will be relocated offsite. Their
17 two buildings will be demolished, and a new
18 residential building will be constructed with
19 commercial space on the ground floor, and
20 affordable housing units will be constructed on the
21 floors above. Publicly accessible open space would
22 be located to the south and along the periphery of
23 the site.

24 This is an illustrative rendering
25 showing the activation of the site in the future,

1

2 with the proposed development. This visual
3 provides a better sense of the relationship between
4 the surrounding neighborhood, the existing armory
5 building, and the proposed residential building.
6 The proposed public open space is visible in the
7 foreground along West Kingsbridge Road.

8 As shown here, the proposal
9 includes a number of discretionary land use
10 actions, including the disposition of city-owned
11 property, which is the Armory site and the National
12 Guard site, to a private developer pursuant to New
13 York City Charter Section 197-c, and separate
14 mayoral and borough board approval pursuant to City
15 Charter Section 384(b)(4).

16 Acquisition of property from New
17 York State may be required for the redevelopment of
18 the National Guard site. A zoning map amendment to
19 rezone the project block to accommodate a wider
20 range of uses, including light industrial use. A
21 zoning special permit may be required to allow an
22 arena capacity of greater than 2,500 persons. An
23 additional special permit may be required to allow
24 parking in excess of what is currently permitted.

25 Zoning tax amendments may be

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2 required to increase permitted arena capacity or to
3 modify other requirements.

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5 A zoning text amendment may be
6 required to modify minimum distance between
7 buildings on the same zoning lot, and maximum base
8 height restrictions.

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9 If a transit easement volume is
10 required by the MTA, a zoning certification
11 pursuant to Section 66-21 will also be required.

11

12 I will now introduce Charlie
13 Fields with AKRF to provide an overview of the
14 environmental review framework and scope.

14

15 MR. FIELDS: Thank you, Jaclyn.
16 Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Charlie
17 Fields, and I'm with AKRF, the Environmental
18 Consultant working with EDC and the mayor's office
19 on the project.

19

20 As noted by Esther, the draft
21 scope of work has been issued and today we're here
22 to listen to your comments on the draft scope.

22

23 Now, I'm going to provide a brief
24 overview of the approach to the environmental
25 review, the analysis framework in the technical
26 areas in the draft scope. So let's talk about the

1
2 analysis framework.

3 The Environmental Assessment
4 Statement, or EAS, that was prepared and released
5 by the mayor's office determined that the proposed
6 project has the potential to result in effects,
7 such that an environmental impact statement is
8 required. In an EIS, the effects of a proposed
9 project are compared to a no-action condition,
10 which is what would happen if the proposed project
11 did not occur. So for this project, in the
12 no-action condition, the development site is
13 anticipated to continue as it is today with no
14 change to the buildings or uses.

15 The project is expected to be
16 completed and operational in 2032, so the EIS will
17 forecast conditions for that future year.

18 The EIS will consider a mixed-use
19 development on both the site of the Armory and the
20 National Guard site to the north. The table on
21 this slide shows the With Action Development
22 program that will be studied in the EIS, and that
23 will form the basis for the environmental analysis.

24 As noted in the draft scope, the
25 EIS will assume redevelopment on the Armory site,

1
2 with film and studio space, cultural and museum
3 uses, community facility, fitness and recreation,
4 restaurant and retail uses, light industrial space,
5 and an entertainment venue with a capacity of
6 13,000. There will also be space for parking,
7 loading, and back-of-house operations. The
8 National Guard site will be developed with
9 approximately 500 units of affordable housing.

10 As shown in this next slide, we
11 expect that most or all of the technical areas from
12 the CEQR Technical Manual will need to be examined
13 in the EIS. For each of the environmental areas,
14 the draft EIS will consider future conditions
15 without, and with the proposed actions for the
16 analysis year of 2032. The DEIS will also account
17 for other approved or plan development projects
18 that are likely to be completed by the build here.

19 We'll also look at mitigation,
20 where significant adverse impacts are identified,
21 and consider alternatives to the project.

22 So what I'm going to present now
23 is a short overview of some of the key areas for
24 analysis.

25 The land use analysis will

1
2 identify existing uses and development trends in a
3 quarter-mile study area, discuss the land use and
4 zoning changes that would take place as a result of
5 the proposed actions, and evaluate the project's
6 consistency and compatibility with land use,
7 zoning, and public policy. This chapter will also
8 identify other background projects that will be
9 included in the other EIS analyses.

10 In terms of community facilities,
11 the redevelopment of the National Guard site will
12 include up to 500 new units of affordable housing.
13 And therefore, an analysis of public and
14 intermediate schools and early childhood programs
15 will be undertaken following the guidance of the
16 CEQR technical manual.

17 In addition, the EIS will
18 qualitatively discuss potential inclusion of new
19 community facility space on the Armory site. The
20 draft EIS will examine potential impacts on open
21 space in a half-mile study area, and account for
22 the worker population in a smaller quarter-mile
23 study area. Based on the number of people that
24 would be added to the open space user population,
25 this analysis will quantitatively and qualitatively

1

2 assess how the proposed actions would affect open
3 space conditions.

4 The Armory is a designated
5 historic resource. It's a New York City landmark,
6 and is also listed on the New York State and
7 National Registers of Historic Places. So our
8 historic resources analysis will look at the
9 changes proposed for the Armory and will consider
10 the effects of the new construction planned for the
11 National Guard site.

12 The urban design and visual
13 resources analysis will account for changes in
14 pedestrian-level views from the surrounding area.
15 So the EIS will need to include renderings and
16 diagrams to show what the proposed project would
17 look like.

18 For hazardous materials, the
19 project site includes older buildings, and has been
20 used for many years as military facility. To
21 ensure that there are no potential impacts to
22 workers or the community, hazardous material
23 studies, including a Phase I environmental site
24 assessment will be prepared and work performed to
25 date will be summarized in the EIS.

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If potential issues are identified, the EIS will identify any additional work required to avoid adverse impacts.

The transportation chapter will analyze the project's potential effects on local traffic, arcing and pedestrian conditions, as well as public transit services. The analysis framework will be developed with the agencies to determine study area intersections, area sidewalks, corners, and crosswalks, and transit elements for analysis. We will also look at vehicular and pedestrian safety, as well as parking conditions.

The draft EIS will also include an analysis of potential construction-related impacts. It will include a conceptual schedule, and a description of construction activities. This chapter will assess environmental concerns related to construction such as vehicular and pedestrian conditions, air quality, hazardous materials, and noise. Measures to minimize or avoid potential construction impacts will also be identified.

Finally, as documented in the draft scope of work, there are a number of other technical areas that will be covered in the draft

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2 DIS, including; socioeconomic conditions, shadows,
3 air quality, and greenhouse gases, noise,
4 infrastructure, sanitation and energy, neighborhood
5 character, and if necessary, public health. Thank
6 you very much for coming this afternoon. We look
7 forward to hearing your comments on the draft scope
8 of work. I will now turn it back to Esther.

9 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
10 Charlie, for explaining all this.

11 Again, written comments on the
12 draft scope of work will be accepted by the lead
13 agency through Friday, February 28th, 2025, at 5:00
14 p.m. Comments can be emailed to
15 ebrunner@cityhall.nyc.gov. Comments can be mailed
16 to the Mayor's Office of Environmental
17 Coordination, attention; Esther Brunner, at 100
18 Gold Street, 2nd Floor at New York, New York 10038.

19 As I mentioned at the beginning of
20 the meeting, if you signed up to speak before the
21 meeting, during the registration process, we have
22 your name and you will be called in the order you
23 registered.

24 If you did not sign up to speak
25 before the start of the meeting but would like to

1
2 speak, please identify yourself using raise hand on
3 Zoom. Instructions for this are being shown on
4 your screen right now, and will be shown
5 periodically during the meeting. If you are
6 joining by phone only, you may dial *9 to indicate
7 your desire to provide testimony. Participants
8 using the raise hand function or *9 will be added
9 to the end of the speaker list. The option to sign
10 up to speak will end at approximately 7:30 p.m.

11 Each speaker will be allowed three
12 minutes to assure that everyone gets a chance to
13 provide their thoughts here today. Elected
14 officials, community board, district managers or
15 chairs, or representatives of government agencies
16 will be provided the courtesy of speaking first.
17 I'll begin by calling the name of these priority
18 speakers.

19 First, we have Joe Newman, who is
20 speaking on behalf of Congressman Espaillat. Joe,
21 are you here?

22 MR. NEWMAN: Hi. I am here, and
23 thank you for having me --

24 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great.

25 MR. NEWMAN: -- and appreciate the

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2 patience while with the tech. But as you noted,
3 the congressman sends his regrets for not being
4 able to join personally. He asked that I joined
5 the meeting and pass along his strong support for
6 the Kingsbridge Armory project and his appreciation
7 for the public and private sector contributors at
8 EDC, MADD Equities, Community Board 7, and
9 countless others.

10

As the team here has detailed
11 thoroughly on this call, the project is on track to
12 generate a lot of lucrative local jobs, hundreds of
13 permanent affordable housing units, grounds and
14 programming that is accessible to the community.
15 It's going to have, I think a large performance
16 venue, and will certainly catalyze growth in small
17 business, not only for those potential tenants, but
18 for those in the -- in the surrounding community.

19

And he could not be more proud to
20 work with his congressional colleagues to secure
21 federal funding support for the initiative, but he
22 also remains committed to seeing this through to
23 the very end, and ensuring that the final product
24 at the Armory is a reflection of the community's
25 needs, input, and he just could not be more

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2 grateful for everyone's work and contributions to
3 this effort thus far. With that, I yield back.

4

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
5 Joe, for your testimony on behalf of the
6 congressman. Thank you. Then moving on to the
7 Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson. Ms.
8 Gibson, are you present? Let's give it a second.

9

MS. GIBSON: I'm here.

10

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Hi, good
11 afternoon, Ms. Gibson. Are you ready to speak?

12

MS. GIBSON: Can you give me one
13 moment and I'll be ready. Thank you.

14

CHAIR BRUNNER: Yeah, no problem.

15

MS. GIBSON: I am ready. Good
16 afternoon.

17

CHAIR BRUNNER: Good afternoon.

18

MS. GIBSON: Thank you so much.
19 Thank you for your time. I really appreciate it.
20 I first want to begin by saying good evening,
21 everyone, and thank you for the opportunity. I
22 want to especially recognize the Economic
23 Development Corporation, as well as the Mayor's
24 Office of Contracts, DCAS, the Northwest Bronx
25 Community and Clergy Coalition. One of our

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2 co-chairs, Council Member Pierina Sanchez, Co-chair
3 Sandra Lobo, and the entire Together for
4 Kingsbridge Coalition, and really everyone that's a
5 part of the working group and all of our advocates
6 that have been a part of this incredibly long
7 journey for quite some time, I thank you so much
8 for the opportunity tonight.

9

I am Bronx Borough President
10 Vanessa L. Gibson, and I'm so grateful to be here
11 to talk about our collective work, and recognizing
12 the dedication of all of our stakeholders in
13 bringing this ambitious vision to fruition to
14 reimagine the Kingsbridge Armory.

15

The proposed development for the
16 historic Kingsbridge Armory is a once-in-a-lifetime
17 transformative opportunity to really drive
18 unprecedented economic growth and development in
19 our local Kingsbridge community, but also
20 supporting our entire borough with economic
21 development and job growth that really will
22 transcend across the borough as well as the city of
23 New York.

24

Since the 1980s, the Kingsbridge
25 Armory has been largely vacant with multiple

1
2 temporary uses and not a permanent use, and this
3 proposal for us today, El Centro Kingsbridge, marks
4 a significant step towards converting our Armory
5 into a mixture of productivity, of economic
6 development, of community spaces, of education, of
7 recreation, and real opportunities to transform
8 this space into an economic engine for our
9 neighborhood and for the entire borough of the
10 Bronx. I am very, very excited about this
11 opportunity. And we know that the guiding
12 principles that were in the 2023 vision plan truly
13 reflect our vision, our blueprint, our goals, and
14 the principles that we identified collectively as a
15 community.

16 The Kingsbridge working Group,
17 shaping our ideas, thousands of ideas, bringing
18 them together during extensive community
19 engagement. During that process, there was nine
20 months of activity of remote calls in person
21 meetings. 4,000 community residents and members
22 got together more than 75 of our industry
23 stakeholders that really put this vision together.
24 And I want to applaud each and every one of you for
25 realizing that we are all a part of the solution to

1

2 really drive the transformative change that our
3 community and our borough absolutely deserves.

4 Redeveloping the Armory will help
5 to transform our neighborhood, it will invest in
6 economic growth in revitalizing our community, and
7 create much-needed affordable permanent housing,
8 establishing new opportunities for education and
9 emerging markets like tech right here in our
10 borough. The disposition of city-owned property,
11 the zoning map amendment at the heart of the
12 proposed El Centro Kingsbridge project is a
13 mixed-use development containing commercial
14 community's facility and light manufacturing
15 industrial uses.

16 The proposed zoning map amendment
17 and the disposition of city-owned land will permit
18 opportunities for local businesses to thrive,
19 accommodate more diverse uses that will put the
20 Kingsbridge neighborhood on the map as a retail and
21 commercial destination for all to visit.

22 Additionally, the acquisition of
23 the National Guard site from the New York state and
24 potential funding from the city HPD and many others
25 would allow for the redevelopment of the site with

1

2 500 new permanently affordable residential units.

3

4 New and existing residents alike
5 who call Kingsbridge their home, will be able to
6 enjoy and experience and benefit from all of the
7 amenities that are proposed, as well as
8 recreational uses in the El Centro Kingsbridge
9 project.

9

10 Maximizing community ownership,
11 which we talk extensively about, of the armory will
12 provide equitable development of the site, ensuring
13 that this investment in our Kingsbridge community
14 will benefit a diverse range of residents, rather
15 than contributing to displacement.

15

16 I support the responsible and
17 innovative use of city and state-owned property
18 that will really facilitate the proposed mixed-use
19 development that will serve as engines of economic
20 growth, of vitality and social equity, and
21 sustainable urban growth. The zoning special
22 permit and the text amendment, excuse me, that
23 would be required to permit the development of an
24 arena as part of the El Centro Kingsbridge proposal
25 represents a significant opportunity to drive
economic growth, enhance our community engagement,

1

2 and establish our armory as a dynamic cultural and
3 entertainment hub.

4 With the appropriate zoning
5 modifications, the Armory will be transformed into
6 a landmark historic destination that will provide
7 lasting value to our community. A well-planned
8 arena can serve as a catalyst for local business
9 development, supporting our street vendors, our
10 local entrepreneurs, our MWBEs, job creation,
11 increased tourism, which we support across the
12 borough, generating substantial economic benefits
13 for the Kingsbridge community and the city of New
14 York.

15 This arena will be multipurpose.
16 The facility would host concerts, conventions,
17 large-scale events, medium-scale events, community
18 events, providing all year-round activation that
19 would support our surrounding businesses. The
20 proposed facility would also meet accessibility
21 requirements, which is a priority for us for
22 access, making the Armory a more inclusive public
23 space.

24 As the Kingsbridge Armory is a New
25 York City landmark, and the proposed redevelopment

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2 of the building will receive city, state, and
3 federal funding, it's crucial that the proposed
4 development meet all required approvals from the
5 New York Landmarks Preservation Commission, the New
6 York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic
7 Preservation, the National Park Service, and the
8 New York State Historic Preservation, in order to
9 protect the architecture, the cultural and
10 historical significance of this valued landmark
11 site, ensuring that the irreplaceable treasure
12 known as the Armory remains a vital part of our
13 borough for generations to come.

14 While I am in support of ensuring
15 the Armory is preserved, I also recognize that the
16 thoughtful and appropriate modernization of the
17 Kingsbridge Armory to El Centro Kingsbridge is
18 important to foster this change. The balance of
19 this preservation and adaptive reuse is important
20 to ensure that the Armory really is a destination
21 that respects the past, respects our history, the
22 culture, while also meeting contemporary needs,
23 fostering a built environment that truly reflects
24 both history as well as progress.

25 In addition to the land marking

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2 statement, there are a couple of areas of the
3 proposed scope that I will briefly address that may
4 present the most impactful potential change. The
5 hazardous materials, prevent previous environmental
6 site assessments, identify petroleum storage, the
7 vehicle maintenance, and the firing ranges as uses
8 that were previously on the site and that may need
9 remediation.

10 Further assessments and testing at
11 the project site may require a remedial action plan
12 and an associated health and safety plan for the
13 construction work at the site. Any remediation
14 action must minimize exposure to the community at
15 all costs, and we are taking feedback from local
16 stakeholders, environmentalists, and many of our
17 advocates into consideration.

18 The addition of the new retail
19 recreational spaces and arena and new housing will
20 greatly increase the level of both vehicular and
21 pedestrian traffic in and around the project site.
22 We know that that is absolutely a reality. So
23 extra attention should be given to the potential
24 impact on public transportation, especially during
25 future standalone events that would take place in

1

2 our proposed arena space, while these events are
3 typical, they would certainly create the greatest
4 peak impact.

5 In conclusion, I do recommend that
6 New York City EDC and DCAS, and MOCS, and all of
7 our relevant city agencies, I thank you so much for
8 your commitment and hearing the community and the
9 residents, and the stakeholders, and businesses,
10 and merchants, and elected officials, and everyone
11 that's been a part of this process for this
12 duration. You all know the Kingsbridge Armory is
13 super important to us. We've already allocated \$2
14 million to the Armory, and we look forward to
15 working with all of our colleagues, Council Member
16 Pierina Sanchez, as well as the New York City
17 Council Speaker Adrienne Adams, our Congress Member
18 Adriano Espaillat, our senator, our assembly
19 member. We are all united in this effort because
20 we truly see the promise and the potential that the
21 Armory does present, not just for this generation,
22 but for future generations to come.

23 And so, as I highlighted in my
24 2022 strategic policy plan, our policy statement,
25 we talked about the Armory, we talked about the

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2 meaningful impact that this will have, we talked
3 about growing our borough, we talked about economic
4 growth, job growth, boosting tourism. We know that
5 we expect more visitors, but we do all of that with
6 the community in mind, with the character of our
7 neighborhood in mind.

8 We do it to make sure we protect
9 our people, our people first, as we welcome new
10 residents, and we also protect the fabric of the
11 work that we've done all these years. So I feel
12 like this is such an important moment for us.
13 There is such an excitement around the Armory, no
14 matter where I go, even residents that don't live
15 in Kingsbridge are asking what is happening at the
16 Armory.

17 They've heard so many stories,
18 they see the articles, and they're not yet sure,
19 but I assure you that as we talk more about this,
20 people will know exactly what we are intending to
21 do to reimagine the Kingsbridge Armory.

22 So this extensive public
23 engagement behind this vision plan truly
24 underscores the urgency and the priority of seizing
25 this moment, of this opportunity, of this

1

2 transformation of our armory. And now is truly the
3 time for us in the Bronx and the city and the state
4 of New York to really come together and recognize
5 this important project.

6 I do want to recognize Governor
7 Kathy Hochul and the State for \$100 million
8 commitment, as well as Mayor Eric Adams and the
9 City of New York, and their \$100 million
10 commitment. Thank you for recognizing that it is
11 time for the Bronx, our borough, to lead in
12 something good and transformative that can really
13 have an impact for generations to come.

14 I thank you so much for your time
15 tonight, and I look forward to working with each
16 and every one of you on this incredible journey to
17 reimagine our Kingsbridge Armory. Thank you so
18 much.

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
20 Borough President Gibson, for your testimony. Very
21 much appreciated.

22 Moving on to the next priority
23 speaker who was already mentioned, and it is
24 Pierina Sanchez, Council Member New York City
25 Council. Pierina, Council member -- Council Member

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2 Sanchez, are you present?

3 MS. SANCHEZ: Yes, I'm here.

4 CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi. Good

5 afternoon.

6 MS. SANCHEZ: Can you hear me?

7 CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes, we hear you.

8 We see you. Thank you.

9 MS. SANCHEZ: Great. thank you.

10 Thank you so much, Esther. It's great to see you.

11 Hi, everyone. I'm Council Member Pierina Sanchez,

12 and I'm technically on maternity leave. You will

13 see my little baby; I apologize in advance if she

14 starts crying. But I wanted to take this

15 opportunity to thank everyone for attending this

16 evening, there are over 115 people in the Zoom

17 room, and that makes -- that makes me very proud

18 and it fills my heart. So thank you for joining.

19 This is the first time that the

20 public has -- the first opportunity the public has

21 to provide formal input since the RFP selection was

22 made by EDC, but certainly, it will not be the

23 last. It is a very important opportunity. I want

24 to start off, similarly, to Borough President

25 Gibson, just acknowledging and thanking all of the

1
2 individuals and office holders who made getting
3 here to this point possible on such a fast
4 timeline.

5 \$215 million invested through the
6 city, through the mayor and EDC, through our state
7 partners, through Governor Kathy Hochul, the
8 Speaker of the City Council Adrienne Adams, Borough
9 President Gibson, and Congressman Adriana
10 Espaillat.

11 I also want to thank all of the
12 participants of the community working group who
13 work so diligently to ensure that we were able to
14 reach 4,000 community members through all of the
15 different means that we reached out. And so, in
16 addition to those mentioned, Senator Jackson, New
17 York State Senator Rivera, Gustavo Rivera, Assembly
18 Member George Alvarez, and Assembly Member Yudelka
19 Tapia, and Jeffrey Dinowitz.

20 I also want to thank Community
21 Board 7, the Bronx Cooperative Development
22 Initiative, Bronx Economic Development Corporation,
23 the Burnside Tremont Jerome Merchant Association,
24 the parents from Community Education Council in
25 District 10 -- School District 10, Dominicanos USA,

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2 Kingsbridge Heights Community Center at Kingsbridge
3 Road Merchants Association, Lehman College, Labor
4 Union 79, Local 79, Mekong NYC, Monroe College,
5 Morris Heights Community -- excuse me, Morris
6 Heights Health Center, the Central Labor Council,
7 our Lady of Angels Parish, the Street Vendor
8 Project, the Gardner Foundation, and United
9 Neighborhood Housing Program. Thank you all so
10 much for everything that you've done to get us to
11 this point.

12 I also want to thank all of the
13 applicants, and congratulate the 8th Regiment
14 Partners led by MADDD Equities for reaching the
15 stage. And of course, I would be remise to not
16 thank the EDC staff who has been so diligent in
17 your leadership, President Kimball, for all your
18 work and advocacy. And especially want to thank
19 all of those that will be involved in the next
20 stages, so the Mayor's Office of Environmental
21 Coordination, and all of the technical agencies
22 that we'll be reviewing the comments received
23 today, and reviewing the scope of work, .

24 Built in 1917, and used over the
25 years as a military hub, a concert space, food

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2 distribution hub during COVID-19, a film studio,
3 the Kingsbridge Armory is said to be one of the
4 largest in the world. Certainly, in my opinion, as
5 someone who grew up in the shadows of the
6 Kingsbridge Armory, it is one of the most
7 beautiful.

8 The Kingsbridge Armory represents
9 the vast potential of our community. As you heard,
10 we have engaged through a nine-month community
11 engagement process in 2023, thousands of residents
12 of the Bronx in concentration here in the
13 Kingsbridge neighborhood. And this year, EDC
14 reviewed many, many responses to its RAP, and
15 selected 8th Regiment Partners.

16 Today and until February 28th at
17 5:00 p.m., I want to implore the community to sit
18 down, write down your perspectives on this scope of
19 work. It is critical that we are heard during this
20 stage, because later, it will be too late. If
21 items are determined to be out of scope, we won't
22 be able to consider them as we move forward in the
23 ULURP process.

24 I want to reaffirm that I remain
25 committed to fighting to ensure our community

1

2 priorities are front and center via the continued
3 community engagement, with community -- the
4 community working group and the community at large.
5 We've already convened as a working group to have a
6 first discussion on the selected partnership, and
7 we want to continue those conversations as
8 discussions move forward.

9 We've heard from the community
10 that the project must prioritize young people,
11 welcome older adults, foster intergenerational
12 relationships, great jobs and wealth for existing
13 workers and communities, grow a regenerative local
14 economy, put the Bronx on the map, as you've heard,
15 and maximize community ownership. We want to
16 continue hearing from you, because right now, this
17 -- the program for the Armory is not baked. It is
18 not fully cooked. And so as conversations go on,
19 we want to continue to hear the community's
20 feedback on where the team is landing.

21 The project final scope of work,
22 must be scoped to accommodate the uses the
23 community most needs. Taking into account the
24 impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, most
25 specifically small businesses and renters is

1

2 something we've already heard about, because our
3 community wants development without displacement.

4

5 This project can have
6 transformational economic development impact on the
7 Bronx, and it will have ripple effects. So we want
8 to make sure that it is built to the highest
9 standards. We want to make sure that the project
10 is built to the highest environmental standards,
11 and that it is going to be producing the maximum
12 number of good-paying union jobs and hiring locally
13 in our community.

14

15 I, for one, have heard the
16 feedback that we want to study higher density on
17 the housing site, the National Guard site, given
18 the great need for affordable housing in the area.

19

20 Thank you all for your time.
21 Thank you for attending. And as I mentioned, it's
22 very important for the community to submit in
23 writing your perspectives on the draft scope of
24 work by Friday, February 28th, at 5:00 p.m. And be
25 assured that although this is the first time that
we're reconvening to talk about the Armory since
our extensive community engagement in 2023, it will
not be the last.

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This action will be going through the Uniform Land Use Review procedure, the community board will weigh in the borough president, and I as a council member, and the council as a body will vote on the final proposal.

So please, make sure that we are continuing to hear from you, and thank you so much for your time. Thanks, everyone.

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much, Council Member Sanchez, for your testimony. Very much appreciated. The next priority speaker is Sari Mendoza, who will be speaking on behalf of Senator Rivera. Sari, are you present?

MS. MENDOZA: Hi, yes.

CHAIR BRUNNER: There she is. Great.

MS. MENDOZA: Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. Senator Rivera wanted to be here with you all today, but he's currently in Albany in the middle of the '25-26 legislative session. However, he did not want to miss the opportunity to speak about the importance of this project to our community and asked me to share the following message on his behalf.

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Senator Rivera's district included the Kingsbridge Armory until the start of January 2023, when the new district lines took effect and the Kingsbridge Armory was drawn outside of his current senatorial district. However, he represents tens of thousands of Bronx sites who deserve to benefit from this redevelopment.

Although Senator Rivera no longer lives a block away from this historic site, something he would emphasize in the past redevelopment project, his constituents and his own team members like myself, continue to live close to this -- to the Armory.

Since 2017, Senator Rivera has been able to secure over a hundred million exclusively for the redevelopment of the Armory in the State budget. He has worked hard to secure this funding each year because he truly believes that the Armory is a beacon of hope for the Kingsbridge neighborhood, small businesses, local residents, and as well as the Bronx overall.

We cannot afford to repeat past mistakes where the selected developer prioritized profit while undermining and displacing our

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2 community. As we start to navigate the ULURP
3 process, it is our hope that our community
4 stakeholders can hold good-faith conversations with
5 the newly selected developer, 8th Regiment Partners
6 LLC.

7 We expect these developers to
8 communicate with us as neighbors and integrate the
9 vision that our neighbors shared during the
10 visioning process, which was shared earlier, such
11 as including the Bronx Community Land Trust CLT.
12 This way we'll ensure that the voices of our
13 community remain at the forefront of the
14 decision-making process.

15 Further, Senator Rivera has been
16 very clear that the aspirations, needs, and
17 concerns of our community must be addressed and
18 protected through a legally binding Community
19 Benefits Agreement, CBA. Our expectation is that
20 this developer will readily commit to an even
21 better CBA than the nationally renowned agreement
22 that our community won during the last process.

23 Thank you to each one of you for
24 being here today. Senator Rivera, will continue to
25 work with the community -- with the support of the

1
2 community to make sure that this project finally
3 fills its potential and prioritizes our
4 neighborhoods and our borough. Thank you.

5 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
6 much, Sari, for your testimony on behalf of the
7 Senator. Thank you.

8 Moving on to our currently last
9 priority speaker. This is Kimberly Kendall from
10 Lehman College, CUNY. Kimberly, are you present
11 and ready to speak?

12 MS. KENDALL: Yes, I am. Thank
13 you so much.

14 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great.

15 MS. KENDALL: Excellent. So my
16 name is Kimberly Kendall, I am a proud resident of
17 Kingsbridge Heights, and also the Interim Dean of
18 the School of continuing professional studies at
19 Lehman College, CUNY.

20 Lehman College is the only public
21 senior college in The Bronx, and we're located just
22 two blocks away from the Kingsbridge Armory site.
23 I'm here today to advocate for the incorporation of
24 the -- in the project scope, a strong workforce
25 development and good union jobs. Including

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2 specifically, a clear pathway for Bronx residents
3 to access good paying jobs created by the
4 redevelopment, partnership with all three Bronx
5 CUNY universities on direct workforce development,
6 and most importantly, a long-term commitment to
7 provide opportunities for local CUNY students to
8 gain work experience through paid internships and
9 jobs in the redevelopment.

10 Every day I work with amazing,
11 talented Bronx residents who are seeking career
12 opportunities through education. These residents
13 often have to leave the Bronx upon graduation to
14 achieve economic mobility. With the redevelopment
15 of the Kingsbridge Armory, we create an opportunity
16 for Bronx talent to stay in the Bronx, whether it's
17 a postdoctoral lab scientist, testing soil for
18 environmental remediation, or accounting manager
19 keeping the project on budget, or even direct
20 construction jobs through our partnership with
21 Bronx Community College.

22 Indeed, for all of these roles, it
23 is essential to the -- all these roles are
24 essential to the revitalization of Kingsbridge
25 Armory. Lehman has trained or is capable of

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2 training local talent. It's not only fair, but
3 it's proper and socially equitable that -- and
4 economically sound that the transformation of the
5 Bronx icon, like the Armory encompass economic
6 opportunity for Bronx sites at every stage of the
7 project.

8

I urge the environmental
9 assessment community to include Lehman College and
10 all three CUNY campuses and CUNY students as
11 partners in redevelopment. We stand ready to fill
12 the good jobs mandated by the project scope. Thank
13 you so much.

14

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
15 much, Kimberly, for your testimony. Very much
16 appreciated. So with that we will be moving to
17 comments from the general public, and somebody has
18 already asked in the chat.

19

This is now the time when we will
20 display the next 10 speakers. So if you're one of
21 them, you can get ready to speak. So you will see
22 this list of the next 10 speakers periodically on
23 your screen so that you can prepare for your turn.
24 When your name or the last three digits of your
25 phone number is called, you will be asked to unmute

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2 yourself and we will make sure you are ready before
3 starting the time clock. You can scroll or swipe
4 to see the time clock on your screen to remind you
5 of the length of time left for your testimony.

6 Additionally, a chat message will
7 appear when you have 15 seconds remaining. When
8 three minutes have passed, you will be muted and
9 invited to send any remaining comments to MOEC's
10 mailing or email address.

11 When you testify, please state
12 your name and affiliation, if you have one for the
13 record. As a reminder, this is a scoping meeting
14 for the Kingsbridge Armory Development Project. We
15 encourage all speakers to focus their comments to
16 the draft scope of work for this project. We also
17 ask that speakers exercise civil conduct during
18 their testimony. Speakers using inappropriate
19 language will be muted. Please also be reminded
20 that this is not a Q and A session.

21 The first 10 speakers will be Juan
22 Nunez, Adiana Rivera, Leo Ramirez-V, Stephina
23 Fisher, Juliana Leite, Marc Shi, Elisabeth
24 Ortega-Bailey, Stephanie Caban, Paul Lipson, and
25 Natalia Foreman. I'm starting to ask Juan Nunez to

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2 please get ready to speak. Are you present, Juan?
3 Let's give it a moment, I know Juan is ready to
4 speak. Juan, please let me know if you are present
5 and ready to speak now.

6 MR. NUNEZ: Yes, I am present.

7 CHAIR BRUNNER: Hello.

8 MR. NUNEZ: And I am ready to
9 speak right now.

10 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. So you may
11 start.

12 MR. NUNEZ: Hello, my name is Juan
13 Nunez, I am part of the Northwest Bronx Community
14 and Clergy Coalition. I have been a part of the
15 Kingsbridge community now for more than 20 years
16 and the Northwest Bronx have been working towards a
17 community-driven development at the Kingsbridge
18 Armory for over 30 years.

19 Over the past two years, I've been
20 working closely with the Kingsbridge Road Merchant
21 Association to support our small businesses who are
22 struggling to obtain long-term leases and keeping
23 up with the rising cost of rent. I've also been
24 trying to support our street vendors who are
25 dealing with constant harassment and enforcement

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2 from sanitation police, and now ice agents.

3

4 Small businesses are the backbone
5 of our local economy, and the Kingsbridge Armory
6 project must protect and uplift them. That's why I
7 urge the city to study and incorporate the
8 following: the developments impact on local small
9 businesses, particularly those at risk of
10 displacement; opportunities for small businesses,
11 especially minority and women-owned businesses, to
12 secure contracts during construction and operation;
13 inclusion of affordable commercial spaces within
14 the Armory that are complimentary and not in
15 competition with the local commercial corridor, to
16 ensure local entrepreneurs like our local street
17 vendors have access to resources and opportunities
18 to thrive.

18

19 This project must prioritize local
20 businesses, including street vendors and
21 entrepreneurs, ensuring that the Bronx economy
22 grows from within. Thank you for the opportunity
23 to speak today.

23

24 The Kingsbridge Armory
25 re-development represents a once-in-a-generation
opportunity to uplift the Bronx, and it is

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2 essential that this project will flex our
3 community's vision for good jobs,
4 anti-displacement, community ownership, and
5 sustainability. I urge you to study these areas
6 and study thoroughly and incorporate into the
7 project design.

8 We look forward to working
9 together to make this vision a reality and to make
10 sure that that vision document is very much
11 reflected in this project. Thank you for your
12 time, and I look forward to working together.

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you, Juan,
14 very much for your testimony. Moving on to the
15 next person on this list. This is Adiana Rivera.
16 Adiana --

17 MS. RIVERA: Hi.

18 CHAIR BRUNNER: -- are you
19 present?

20 MS. RIVERA: Yes.

21 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great.

22 MS. RIVERA: Can you see me?

23 CHAIR BRUNNER: I can see you and
24 I can hear you. You may start.

25 MS. RIVERA: Thank you. Good

1
2 afternoon. My name is Adiana Rivera, I am part of
3 the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition.
4 I'm 30 years old, and I've lived in the -- lived in
5 the Bronx Kingsburg specifically my whole life. In
6 my building, the kids I grew up with are now
7 raising their children. For generations, we have
8 seen the Armory as a landmark. My fear is that the
9 development at the Kingsbridge Armory would be a
10 landmark for displacement, a landmark letting us
11 know that rising rents and affordable development,
12 the Bronx biggest threats, are welcomed here when
13 they are not.

14 Displacement is preventable and I
15 urge you to prevent displacement by incorporating
16 -- sorry, I ask you to conduct or by incorporating
17 -- never mind, sorry. I ask that you conduct a
18 study on the development potential to impact
19 housing affordability and displacement in
20 surrounding neighborhoods.

21 Currently, our affordable housing
22 criteria allows up to 80 percent area medium
23 income, which is over 86,000 a year for an
24 individual. But the average income in individuals
25 at Kingsbridge is less than 54,000 a year, which

1

2 would fall under 30 percent AMI. I ask that you
3 change the affordable housing criteria, which
4 allows up to 80 percent area medium income to
5 instead prioritize those making 30 percent area
6 medium income to match the income of the
7 Kingsbridge neighborhood.

8 Currently, it seems this plan is
9 already leading to displacement. Real solutions
10 for displacement would be ensuring that this
11 development incorporates protections for existing
12 residents and small businesses through community
13 land trusts, community ownership, and rent
14 stabilization measures. This project should
15 prioritize long-term community-driven governance
16 structures to ensure accountability and equality.

17 The Kingsbridge Armory Project has
18 the opportunity to uplift the Bronx and provide
19 good jobs with sustainability. I hope all of you
20 hold each other accountable and this project
21 accountable for the thousands of people it will be
22 affecting, and ensure the effects will only be
23 positive for this beautiful and very deserving
24 neighborhood.

25 I needed the developers to ensure

1

2 there will be anti-displacement measures, and
3 practical affordable housing to ensure that the
4 Kingsbridge children of today will be able to raise
5 the Kingsbridge children of tomorrow. Thank you
6 for the opportunity to speak today.

7 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
8 Adiana, for your comments. The next speaker is Leo
9 Ramirez-V. And Leo, are you present and ready to
10 speak?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. We think
13 Leo is not here yet, so we jump on to the next
14 person who is Stephina Fisher. Stephina, are you
15 present and ready to talk?

16 MS. FISHER: Hi, good evening.
17 Can you hear me?

18 CHAIR BRUNNER: I can hear you.

19 MS. FISHER: Great, thank you.

20 CHAIR BRUNNER: You may start.

21 MS. FISHER: Good afternoon. My
22 name is Stephina Fisher, and I'm a 16-year-long New
23 York City public school teacher in District 10, at
24 Bronx Academy for software engineering.

25 And my 12th-grade civics classes

1
2 have been involved in all of the Together for
3 Kingsbridge visiting meetings, and they become
4 leaders in various armory committees. Based on my
5 extensive experiences with youth in the Together
6 for Kingsbridge visiting process, today I'm proudly
7 advocating for the environmental impact to study
8 how El Centro could be a youth-run economic engine
9 that fosters a regenerative local economy and
10 maximizes community ownership.

11 I believe youth-led
12 decision-making and internship-to-ownership
13 programs need to be expanded on a massive scale and
14 the Armory should be the place to do this. The
15 MADD Equities plan has many of the spaces the
16 community asked for, like light industrial, film
17 studio, rec centers, but it seems to me that the
18 ownership and decision-making models have yet to be
19 laid out transparently.

20 And this potentially disregards
21 the component of the Together for Kingsbridge
22 Vision Plan, which clearly states the armory
23 development should bring a regenerative local
24 economy that maximizes community ownership. So to
25 adjust for this gap in the MADD Equities proposal,

1

2 I believe we should study how the Armory could be a
3 landmark for young people to be trained in
4 community ownership, and decision-making strategies
5 to become co-owners of the businesses and the
6 programs operating in the Armory.

7 Let's imagine; El Centro, the
8 facilities are actually cooperatively owned and
9 operated by the youth who use them. Youth in high
10 schools through their career and technical
11 education and work-based learning programs can be
12 trained in the internship level, how to do all the
13 programming, maintain the spaces, run the
14 operations. And job and workforce training is
15 already planned for the Armory, so this could be
16 deeply connected to schools, and we could shift
17 toward youth ownership in the Armory.

18 In short, we don't want to semi
19 affordable scenario like the Major Owens Armory,
20 which has a limited number of truly affordable
21 memberships. And we don't simply want to service
22 providing armory. We want a Kingsbridge Armory
23 redevelopment that creates pathways for residents,
24 especially young people to fight against potential
25 displacement by building generational wealth

1

2 through that generative local economy and
3 maximizing community ownership. And I believe
4 truly, that this could be done through youth
5 co-ownership and co-decision-making at every
6 touchpoint in the Armory development.

7 So please, study how can we
8 establish deep partnerships between the Department
9 of Education Schools Career Pathways, and the
10 Armory's job and workforce training that centers
11 youth as future community owners and operators of
12 the Kingsbridge Armory. Thank you so much and have
13 a great evening.

14 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
15 much, Stephina for your testimony. Moving on to
16 the next speaker. That's Juliana Leite. Juliana,
17 are you here?

18 MS. LEITE: Yes. Hello.

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi, you may start.
20 Thank you.

21 MS. LEITE: Hello. My name is --
22 oh, sorry. Hello, my name is Juliana, and I'm part
23 of the Northwest Bronx and Community and Clergy
24 Coalition. I have been part of this community for
25 nearly four years. We have been working towards

1
2 community drive development at the Kingsbridge
3 Armory for over 30 years.

4 While many of us are optimistic
5 about its potential to address the goals and
6 priorities about the Public Act in the UDC vision
7 document, there are also many questions about the
8 actual proposal selected, and its impact on our
9 community. The Kingsbridge Armory should be
10 marking just development project. It should be a
11 space that celebrates and uplift Bronx culture and
12 history.

13 I urge the city to include the
14 following in the scope. Dedicate space for culture
15 and community programming, such as performance and
16 (unintelligible), office and multipurpose spaces
17 for local organizations. An analysis of how the
18 residence can serve as a hub for Bronx residents
19 fostering connection and creative expression,
20 affordable or subsidized access to this spaces for
21 local groups and residents.

22 This project should reflect the
23 Bronx vibrant identity and serve as a gathering
24 place for generations to come. Thank you for the
25 opportunity to speak today. The Kingsbridge Armory

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2 redevelopment represents an on seeing generational
3 opportunity to uplift the Bronx, and it's essential
4 that this project reflects our community's vision
5 for good jobs, anti-displacement, community
6 ownership, and sustainability.

7 I urge you to ensure that these
8 areas are studied through and incorporated into the
9 project design. We look forward to working
10 together to make this vision a reality. Thank you.

11 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
12 much, Juliana, for your testimony. So I'm moving
13 on to the next speaker, who is Marc Shi. Hi, Marc,
14 I see you. Are you ready to speak?

15 (No verbal response.)

16 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. I cannot
17 hear you yet, but I see you. Okay, Marc, can we
18 move on to the next person, and then we call on you
19 again in a little bit. Hopefully, you can fix it.
20 All righty, so I'm moving on to Elisabeth
21 Ortega-Bailey.

22 MS. ORTEGA-BAILEY: Hello.

23 CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi, Elisabeth. I
24 hear you. I see you.

25 MS. ORTEGA-BAILEY: Yes.

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CHAIR BRUNNER: You can start.

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MS. ORTEGA-BAILEY: Give me one second.

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Yeah, no problem.

6

MS. ORTEGA-BAILEY: Okay. Hi, everyone. My name is Elisabeth Ortega-Bailey, and I'm a part of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. I have been a part of this community for over 20 years, and have been personally involved in the fight for the community-driven development at the Kingsbridge Armory for the past 15 years.

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While I'm excited about the possibility of the Kingsbridge Armory becoming a transformative asset for the surrounding community and the Bronx as a whole, I remain cautious. Many of us dedicated time and energy to shaping the New York City EDC vision document, ensuring that the priorities of the Bronx residents were reflected. However, we are still uncertain whether the selected proposal will fully uphold those priorities and meet the needs of the people who have worked so hard to see this vision realized.

During the visioning process,

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2 community ownership and shared prosperity were the
3 main points that were continuously brought up in
4 the visioning process that community folks wanted
5 the Kingsbridge Armory to be a model for.

6 Today, I'm here to bring up the
7 following things that I feel are crucial things
8 that need to be uplifted in this project. Those
9 things are: the environmental review must include
10 an analysis of community ownership models, such as
11 a community land trust to ensure Bronx residents
12 benefit from the Armory redevelopment; revenue
13 sharing mechanisms that must be studied to
14 determine how the project can reinvest in local
15 initiatives like school parks and affordable
16 housing.

17 The project should also include --
18 should also prioritize long-term community-driven
19 governance structure to ensure accountability and
20 equity. Community ownership is essential to
21 ensuring this development uplifts working people in
22 the Bronx. We have lived and survived in this
23 community for such a long time, and we deserve the
24 opportunity to also thrive as this development gets
25 built.

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The Kingsbridge Armory

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redevelopment represents a once-in-a-generation

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opportunity to uplift the Bronx, and this project

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must reflect our community's vision for good jobs,

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anti-displacement, community ownership, and

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sustainability. I insist that you ensure these

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areas are studied thoroughly and incorporated into

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the project's design.

10

We look forward to working

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together to make this vision a reality. Thank you

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for the opportunity to speak today.

13

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you for your

14

comments, Elisabeth. I'm moving on to the next

15

speaker, Stephanie Caban. Stephanie, are you

16

present?

17

(No response.)

18

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Stephanie

19

may not be present and we will call on her later

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on. Next speaker is Paul Lipson. Paul, are you

21

here and ready --

22

MR. LIPSON: I am.

23

CHAIR BRUNNER: -- to speak?

24

MR. LIPSON: How are you?

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. Good,

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2 good. How are you?

3

MR. LIPSON: Fine, thank you.

4

CHAIR BRUNNER: Great.

5

6 worked on three iterations, all three iterations of
7 the Armory both inside government, outside
8 government, and formally as a resident of the North
9 Bronx. I'm -- for this iteration, I'm concerned
10 about the three 13,000-person cap on the live
11 performance venue. I think it'll handcuff the
12 venue since the Armory in that scenario would be
13 competing head-to-head with Barclays and Madison
14 Square Garden.

15

16 The concern is that there's a gap
17 in the marketplace for live events right now, and
18 it's at the 17 to 20,000 ticket-holder venue where
19 the opportunity is, and where we think, or I think
20 the Armory can be most competitive if we're going
21 head to head with the same venue capacity with the
22 Garden and with Barclays, we're going to lose out
23 on a lot of potential opportunities.

23

24 Now, live events are great, we
25 love them, but to get real permanent living wage,
long-term jobs, and enduring employment, we think

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2 we need -- you need to have a light manufacturing
3 solution in the lower levels of the Armory. That
4 kind of an employment is increasingly leaving the
5 Bronx in up-zone neighborhoods like lower Mott
6 Haven and Port Morris, we are losing manufacturing
7 jobs, and we're losing them from the region as a
8 whole. This is an opportunity to recapture those
9 jobs, hold on to living wage employment, and stem
10 the flight of quality work and quality homegrown
11 businesses from the borough.

12 Lastly, we have this very
13 accomplished core of local Bronx-based food and
14 beverage entrepreneurs. You see them in every
15 neighborhood, they're both manufacturers, they're
16 producers, and they are direct retailers. They are
17 being squeezed by upzoning and rezonings. We want
18 to keep them in the borough, we want to find ways
19 to do that, we want to make sure that in this
20 iteration of the Armory, that there is an emphasis
21 on homegrown local businesses that can both produce
22 and sell inside the building.

23 And that means that the zoning
24 needs to keep in mind accommodations for people who
25 roast coffee, for people who distill, for people

1

2 who brew, for people who are caterers, for people
3 who produce food for the people of the borough.

4 Thank you so much, you have your work cut out for
5 you, but I know we're all in capable hands.

6 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
7 much, Paul, for your testimony. Moving on to the
8 next speaker, Natalia Foreman. Natalia, are you
9 present and ready to speak?

10 MS. FOREMAN: Yeah, I'm ready.
11 Thank you for having me.

12 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great, great. You
13 may start.

14 MS. FOREMAN: Okay. Should I wait
15 till one on the timekeeper? Okay, cool. My name
16 is Natalia, and I am the creator of Curriculum
17 Queens and Educational Collective. I'm also a
18 community member of the Northwest Bronx Community
19 and Clergy Coalition. I have been a part of the
20 Bronx community for almost a decade, but I've been
21 a New York City resident all of my life. Thank you
22 for the opportunity to speak today.

23 The Kingsbridge Armory
24 redevelopment represents a once-in-a-generation
25 opportunity to uplift the Bronx, and it is

1

2 essential that this project reflects the
3 community's visions for good jobs,
4 anti-displacement, community ownership, and
5 sustainability.

6 While many of us are cautiously
7 optimistic about its potential to address the goals
8 and priorities published in the EDC vision
9 document, there are also many questions about the
10 actual proposal selected, and its impacts on our
11 community. Any major redevelopment in our
12 community must account for its impact on local
13 residents, schools, and educational infrastructure.

14 I urge the city to include the
15 following in the environmental review: a study of
16 how the addition of new housing and commercial
17 spaces will affect local schools' enrollment
18 capacity and resources; consideration of funding
19 mechanisms to support public schools in the area to
20 meet the anticipated increased demands;
21 opportunities for the project to include
22 educational programming such as partnerships with
23 schools for training and workforce redevelopment
24 related to the Armory's operations.

25 And I'd like to echo Stephina and

1
2 Adiana's testimonies by naming that we need a
3 realistic plan to ensure that displacement amongst
4 Bronx residents does not happen as a result of the
5 redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory. We ask
6 the developers and project stakeholders to be for
7 real with their promise for affordable housing by
8 truly taking into consideration the actual
9 socioeconomic demographics of residents that are
10 currently within the Kingsbridge Armory --
11 Kingsbridge community, sorry, for what they could
12 truly afford when building that housing.

13 Those who stayed, fought, and
14 built -- rebuilt the Bronx when this borough was
15 neglected for decades by city leaders and officials
16 should not be pushed aside now that developers and
17 investors can see opportunities for economic growth
18 through the Kingsbridge Armory Project.

19 Educational equity must be a
20 priority to ensure that our community is not
21 overlooked in this development.

22 We look forward to working
23 together to make this vision a reality. Thank you
24 so much.

25 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,

1

2 Natalia, for your testimony. Moving back to Marc
3 Shi, hoping that it works with unmuting this time.

4

MR. SHI: Yes.

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Marc.

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MR. SHI: Can you hear me?

7

CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. I can hear

8

you.

9

MR. SHI: Great.

10

CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes.

11

MR. SHI: Okay. Thank you.

12

CHAIR BRUNNER: Sure.

13

MR. SHI: Should I start?

14

CHAIR BRUNNER: Sorry. Yes, you

15

may start.

16

MR. SHI: Okay. Hi everyone.

17

Good evening. My name is Marc Shi, I'm a resident

18

of the Kingsbridge neighborhood, and a primary care

19

doctor working in the South Bronx. Many of us in

20

the community and a number of my healthcare worker

21

colleagues have been involved in the visioning

22

process that led us to today. And while we're

23

excited to see this project move forward, there are

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many questions about this selected proposal and its

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impact on the community.

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One of the greatest threats facing this community today is a threat of displacement as it has already been discussed from ever-increasing rents and housing costs. And as a physician, I see every day the way that unstable housing and high housing costs harms the physical and mental health of my patients, many of whom live in the neighborhood surrounding the Armory.

Every day I talk with people who know firsthand the harms of losing their homes and that the exacerbation of chronic illness, the increased risk of exposure to infection and harmful environments and all the other health harms that comes with that.

And in particular, as a primary care doctor concerned about the lack of access to preventative care, as folks are forced out of their neighborhoods and have to reconnect with care in other places. For those patients, more effective than any prescription that I can give is the ability to stay in their safe, affordable housing as it has been.

Now, I have had patients tell me how those rising rents affect their stress and

1
2 their anxiety, and they're worried about being able
3 to stay in their homes as rents rise around them.
4 And these concerns get even sharper in the setting
5 of neighborhood changes that affect cost of living
6 and property values. And so, I'm particularly
7 concerned that the neighborhood changes prompted by
8 the Armory development could further worsen rent
9 increases and displacement pressures on the
10 surrounding neighborhood, and harm the health of
11 the Kingsbridge community that it aims to support.

12 So it's imperative that the Armory
13 Project contribute to anti-displacement measures
14 and real affordable housing solutions by conducting
15 a study on the developments potential to impact
16 housing affordability and displacement, not just in
17 the affordable housing development that it plans to
18 develop and build, but the ripple effects on
19 surrounding communities.

20 It also needs to explore
21 mechanisms to include deeply affordable housing
22 options within the project or nearby, and
23 incorporate protections for existing residents and
24 small businesses through mechanisms like community
25 land trust, and rent stabilization.

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The Armory must support stability for Bronx residents, not make it impossible for people to live here, not make it a decision to decide whether to stay in the place that you're living or move to somewhere that you can afford.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. It's essential that this project reflects our community's vision for deeply affordable housing that allows community members to stay a part of this community. Thank you.

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much, Marc, for your comments. I'm moving back to Stephanie Caban to see if she's now present and ready to speak.

MS. CABAN: Can you hear me?

CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes, I can, Stephanie.

MS. CABAN: Hi.

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi, you may start.

MS. CABAN: My name is Stephanie Ashley Caban, I am born and raised in the Bronx. I'm 30 years old. I am member of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition for the past two or three years. I also have asthma, so I'm

1

2 here today to advocate that the new development
3 maintains high environmental standards and
4 prioritizes sustainable technologies and green
5 building practices.

6

So specifically, the project must
7 include energy-efficient designs, renewable energy
8 systems, and strategies to reduce the carbon
9 footprint of construction and operations.

10

The environmental impact
11 assessment should study how this development can
12 enhance climate resiliency for the Bronx, including
13 storm water management systems, urban greening, and
14 very specifically air quality improvements.

15

Also, it needs to measure the --
16 to mitigate heat islands and improve building
17 insulation which should be prioritized to address
18 the unique vulnerabilities of our community to
19 address climate change, and to fight climate
20 change.

21

We ask that any environmental
22 decisions positively impact both the local
23 community and the broader environment, ensuring
24 that this development serves as a model for
25 sustainable urban redevelopment. Thank you.

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very much, Stephanie, for your testimony. I'm now moving back to Leo Ramirez-V. Leo, are you now present and/or ready to speak?

(No response.)

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Leo may still not be part of the meeting, so we'll return to him later.

All right. So the next 10 speakers will be Todd Baker, Crystal Reyes, Karen Baez, Edward Garcia, Katherine Mella, Evan Casper-Futterman, Sandra Lobo, Robin Rollan, Christian Ramos, and Caesar Tobar-Acosta. I'm calling on Todd Baker first. Todd, are you present?

MR. BAKER: Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

CHAIR BRUNNER: I can hear you, and you may start.

MR. BAKER: Thank you. Good evening. My name is Todd Baker, I'm a project manager at the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, and I've lived in Kingsbridge Heights for six years.

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I appreciate the New York City EDC's stated goal of selecting a project for the Kingsbridge Armory that promotes the prosperity of this neighborhood and its residents, one that aligns with the values and the priorities articulated in the EDC's vision document.

Nonetheless, I remain concerned about the significant impacts this project could have, and I urge this committee to evaluate the following in regards to socioeconomic conditions.

The first is community ownership and governance models. The EDCs vision document explicitly names community ownership as a guiding principle for the Kingsbridge Armory's redevelopment. Proven models including community land trusts and oversight boards have been successfully implemented across the United States, the EDC and its partnering agencies must thoroughly examine the feasibility of such a model in this instance.

Community ownership structures provide local residents with direct input, decision-making power, and influence over the ongoing operations of the Armory, ensuring that

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2 this project ultimately benefits rather than harms
3 the community.

4 The second feature would be
5 revenue-sharing mechanisms. Rather than relying on
6 the assumption that wealth will trickle down, the
7 city must consider revenue-generating mechanisms
8 that reinvest in the Bronx community. Without such
9 measures, there is a risk this project will
10 primarily benefit outside investors rather than the
11 residents who have fought for and invested in this
12 space. Again, the creation of jobs and wealth for
13 existing workers and communities is a highlighted
14 priority of the vision document.

15 I urge the city and EDC to uphold
16 this priority to the greatest extent possible.
17 This community, which has been historically
18 redlined and disinvested deserves nothing less.
19 This means that formalized revenue-sharing
20 opportunities for local residents must be
21 proactively evaluated as part of the environmental
22 impact review process.

23 The redevelopment of the
24 Kingsbridge Armory represents a rare opportunity to
25 create a model for community-driven economic

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2 growth. Let's make sure we get it right. Thank
3 you for your time and for allowing me to speak
4 today.

5

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
6 much, Todd, for your testimony. I'm moving on to
7 Crystal Reyes. Crystal, are you present?

8

MS. REYES: Yes.

9

CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. You may
10 start with your comments.

11

MS. REYES: Yeah. Good afternoon.
12 My name is Crystal Reyes, I'm the co-organizing
13 director at the Northwest Bronx Committee and
14 Clergy Coalition, as well as a longtime resident,
15 and now homeowner in the Wakefield area of the
16 Bronx.

17

I first got involved with the
18 campaign to redevelop the Kingsbridge Armory when I
19 was 16 years old. Since then, I have witnessed
20 many iterations of this struggle to transform the
21 Armory into vital resources for our community.
22 While I know little about the specifics of the
23 current proposal, I hope it remains true to the
24 goals and priorities outlined in the vision
25 document developed through an intentional community

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2 engagement process led by the New York City EDC.

3

4 Today, I'm here to call that the
5 city studies and incorporates measures to protect
6 young people and immigrants from unnecessary
7 interactions with law enforcement.

7

8 Too often when large-scale
9 developments take place, there is an increased push
10 to clean up neighborhoods to make them more
11 attractive and for affluent communities. This
12 often leads to displacement and over-policing of
13 longstanding residents, workers, and students who
14 call this area home. This is why I urge the city
15 to ensure that this project does not contribute to
16 the over-criminalization of young people, street
17 vendors, and immigrant communities.

17

18 Specifically, I ask that the city
19 study the following: what strategies will be
20 implemented to ensure the law enforcement practices
21 do not disproportionately affect young people,
22 particularly youth of color, local street vendors,
23 both during construction and once project is
24 operational.

24

25 Given our current political
climate, how will the development protect young

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2 people, street vendors and immigrant residents from
3 unnecessary law enforcement intervention? Will the
4 project include safeguards to prevent the targeting
5 of youth based on their race, ethnicity, and
6 socioeconomic status, particularly in areas with
7 high levels of surveillance?

8

As a homeowner, I am deeply
9 concerned about the growing pressure of small
10 homeowners to sell their properties to make way for
11 large-scale luxury development. Therefore, I urge
12 the city to ensure that the project includes strong
13 housing protection to preserve small homeowners'
14 ability to remain in their homes.

15

Specifically, I ask that the city
16 conduct the study on the risk of displacement and
17 proposed strategies to protect long-term residents,
18 particularly those facing financial hardship. What
19 mechanisms will be in place to ensure ongoing
20 community engagement so that small home owners
21 remain involved and protected throughout the
22 development process?

23

Young people, families, and
24 immigrants are the backbone of this community. It
25 is essential that any development in our

1

2 neighborhoods serves rather than displace us. We
3 appreciate that the New York City EDC development
4 in our neighborhoods -- sorry. It is essential
5 that any development in our neighborhood serves
6 rather than displace us.

7 We appreciate that the New York
8 City EDC has published a vision document with our
9 input and expect the selected developer to uphold
10 this vision. As a community, we believe in
11 development, but we insist that it must develop it
12 for us and by us.

13 Thank you for hosting this hearing
14 and we -- and to ensure that the Bronx residents
15 have a platform that -- to shape a project that
16 will impact us all.

17 CHAIR BRUNNER: Perfect timing,
18 Crystal. I'm impressed. Thank you so much for
19 your testimony. I'm moving on to Karen Baez.
20 Karen, are you here?

21 MS. BAEZ: Yes.

22 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great, great.

23 MS. BAEZ: Hi all. My name is
24 Karen, and I'm a part of the Northwest Bronx
25 Community Clergy Coalition. I have been a part of

1

2 this community for 30 years, witnessing both its
3 resilience and the lack of third spaces that truly
4 reflect and celebrate our local culture.

5 The Bronx has long been a beacon
6 of cultural movements, yet we continue to face a
7 scarcity of third spaces, places beyond home and
8 work, where communities can gather, create, and
9 connect. Without these spaces, we risk failing to
10 harness the immense talent that exists in the
11 Bronx. And I work with many tenants who seek
12 places to regularly commune, but our public spaces
13 are limited by highways, poor city planning, and
14 systemic disinvestment.

15 At Northwest Bronx, we have been
16 working towards a community-driven development at
17 the Kingsbridge Armory for over 30 years. And --
18 while many of us see its potential to address the
19 goals and priorities published in the EDC vision
20 document, we also have unanswered questions about
21 the actual proposal selected, and its impacts on
22 our community.

23 The Kingsbridge Armory must be
24 more than just a development project, it should
25 have like a space that celebrates and uplifts Bronx

1
2 culture and history. I urge the city to include
3 the following in the scope; dedicated space for
4 cultural and community programming such as
5 performance venues, office and multipurpose spaces
6 for local organizations; an analysis of how the
7 Armory can serve as a cultural hub for Bronx
8 residents, fostering connection and creative
9 expression, and; affordable or subsidized access to
10 these spaces for local groups and residents,
11 ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all.

12 This project must reflect the
13 Bronx's vibrant identity and serve as a gathering
14 place for generations to come. We owe it to the
15 kids that hang out in school hallways, looking for
16 a space to do extra work. I was one of them that
17 went to Roseville campus, and would roam the halls
18 looking for a place to read after school, because
19 my home was too noisy.

20 We owe it to our people that don't
21 see the power in taking agency in their communities
22 because of a lack of spaces they can abide in. So
23 I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak
24 today. The Kingsbridge Armory redevelopment
25 represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to

1

2 uplift the Bronx, and it is essential that this
3 project reflects our community's vision for good
4 jobs, anti-displacement, community ownership and
5 sustainability.

6

I urge you to ensure these areas
7 are studied thoroughly and incorporated into the
8 project's design. We look forward to seeing how
9 this turns out. Thank you so much.

10

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
11 Karen, for your comments. Next on the list is
12 Edward Garcia. Edward, are you here?

13

MR. GARCIA: Yes.

14

CHAIR BRUNNER: And ready to
15 speak? Great. You may start.

16

MR. GARCIA: Hello everybody. My
17 name is Edward Garcia, and I'm part of Northwest
18 Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. I have been
19 part of the Bronx and the Kingsbridge community for
20 the past 15 years of my life. I went to high
21 school down the block at Burton Campus, and also
22 just across the street from the Armory, I also
23 attended my undergrad, which is Lehman College.

24

Over the last 30 years, Northwest
25 Bronx has been fighting for community-driven

1

2 development of the Kingsbridge Armory, ensuring
3 that it serves as a model for community ownership
4 and shared prosperity.

5

6 While many of us recognize the
7 potential of this project to align with the
8 priorities outlined in the EDC visioning document,
9 we have also critical questions about the selected
10 proposal and its long-term impact on our community.

11

12 I'm here to advocate for the following. The
13 environmental review must include a comprehensive
14 study of community ownership models to ensure Bronx
15 residents benefit from the Kingsbridge Armory.

16

17 In 2020, we incorporated --
18 Northwest Bronx Incorporated a Bronx-wide community
19 land trust to promote safe, healthy, and deeply
20 affordable housing while fostering shared ownership
21 and collective governance. Our work -- our work
22 has demonstrated that true community-driven
23 development must prioritize long-term
24 sustainability, responsible planning, and land
25 stewardship to prevent displacement and encourage
gentrification.

26

27 Through this work, we have built
28 relationship across political and economic sectors,

1

2 providing that shared ownership and community
3 governance are not just ideas, but are real
4 achievable strategies for equitable development.

5

Community members must benefit
6 financially from the Armory's redevelopment.
7 Profits from this project should be not solely
8 benefit an outside developer, they must be
9 reinvested back in the community, and revenue share
10 -- revenue sharing mechanism must be studied to
11 determine how the project can reinvest into the
12 local community.

13

The Armory must become a hub for
14 shared wealth enterprises such as worker
15 cooperatives, opportunities for Bronx residents by
16 supporting worker cooperatives and equitable
17 economic development models.

18

And to conclude, this project
19 should include -- should prioritize long-term
20 community-driven governance structures to ensure
21 accountability and equity. This project should
22 ensure good wages and benefits and training for
23 Bronx residents throughout development process,
24 including ongoing operations. And the project
25 should protect local small businesses and

1

2 prioritize cooperative-owned and minority women
3 owned businesses.

4

The Kingsbridge Armory
5 redevelopment presents a unique opportunity to
6 invest in the Bronx, and it is essential that this
7 project reflects our community's vision for good
8 jobs and to displacement and community ownership
9 and sustainability. And we look forward to
10 ensuring that this vision is made a reality. Thank
11 you for the opportunity.

12

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
13 Edward, for your comments. The next speaker is
14 Katherine Mella. Katherine, are you here? It's my
15 understanding that Katherine is part of a larger
16 group.

17

MS. MELLA: I am here.

18

CHAIR BRUNNER: Yeah. Okay.

19

Hello.

20

MS. MELLA: Thank you. Good

21

evening, everyone.

22

CHAIR BRUNNER: You may start,

23

Katherine.

24

MS. MELLA: My name is Katherine

25

Mella, and I'm the Chief of Staff at the Northwest

1

2 Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. And I've
3 been part of this community for nearly 12 years. I
4 look forward to learning how the selected proposal
5 will address the goals and priorities published in
6 the NYCEDC vision document, and like many others, I
7 also have questions about the project's impact on
8 our community.

9 As an urban planner, I have worked
10 with community faith and labor organizations in the
11 Bronx and beyond to co-create strategies that
12 ensure development and historically marginalized
13 and disinvested communities is equitable,
14 community-driven, and benefits existing residents
15 and businesses over the long-term. These
16 strategies have included models that prioritize
17 shared decision-making and community ownership.

18 During the visioning process for
19 the Kingsbridge Armory, it was clear that Bronx
20 sites envisioned this asset as a model for
21 community ownership and shared prosperity. The
22 environmental review -- so sorry. I'm here today
23 to echo what others have shared and advocate for
24 the following:

25

The environmental review must

1

2 include an analysis of community ownership models
3 as others have named including, the Community Land
4 Trust, to ensure Bronx residents benefit from the
5 Armory redevelopment;

6

Revenue-sharing mechanisms must be
7 studied to determine how the project can reinvest
8 in local initiatives like schools, parks, and
9 affordable housing, and;

10

The project should prioritize
11 long-term community-driven governance structures to
12 ensure accountability and equity.

13

The Armory redevelopment should
14 uplift the Bronx and its outcome will set a
15 precedent across New York City and the country for
16 how development can generate widespread benefits
17 and invest in existing communities. As thousands
18 of Bronx sites have made clear, community ownership
19 is essential to ensuring this development truly
20 benefits working people in the Bronx.

21

The Kingsbridge Armory
22 redevelopment represents a once-in-a-generation
23 opportunity, and its success will be determined by
24 whether it aligns with our community's vision for
25 good jobs, anti-displacement, community ownership

1

2 and sustainability. I urge you to ensure these
3 priorities are thoroughly studied and incorporated
4 into the projects design. Thank you.

5

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
6 Katherine, for your comments. Next on our list is
7 Evan Casper-Futterman.

8

MR. CASPER-FUTTERMAN: Hi, I'm
9 here.

10

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi, Evan.

11

MR. CASPER-FUTTERMAN: Hi.

12

Thanks.

13

CHAIR BRUNNER: You may start with
14 your testimony.

15

MR. CASPER-FUTTERMAN: Great,
16 thanks. My name is Evan Casper-Futterman, and I
17 was born in the Bronx, spent some of my childhood
18 on Bronx Park East and returned in 2016 to live on
19 Mosholu Parkway. I currently live on 190th Street
20 in Morris Avenue, just a few blocks south of the
21 Armory. I've been a member of the Northwest Bronx
22 Community Clergy Coalition since 2016.

23

For my time tonight, I wanted to
24 focus on some answers in the environmental
25 assessment statement, particularly in the technical

1
2 section, which was the most thrilling section of
3 all the EAS full form pages seven and eight. To
4 the following questions, the statement, I believe,
5 an error answered, no, 2(b)(4) indirect business
6 displacement. Would the project potentially
7 introduce trends that make it difficult for
8 businesses to remain in the area? Would the
9 project capture retail sales in a particular
10 category of goods to the extent that the market for
11 such goods would become saturated, potentially
12 resulting in vacancies and disinvestment on
13 neighborhood and commercial streets?

14 2(b)(5) effects on industry.
15 Would the project significantly affect business
16 conditions in any industry or any category of
17 businesses within or outside the study area?

18 Answering no to both of these
19 above questions seems misguided to me and
20 inaccurate according to the CEQR guidelines for two
21 reasons. Firstly, the chosen developer has not
22 really shared who their major tenants and occupants
23 will be, so any predictive analysis suggesting no
24 significant impact is operating on a set of
25 hopeful, but perhaps naive assumptions that would

1

2 more prudently be replaced by assumptions that
3 would ensure stability for existing working-class
4 residents.

5

6 Secondly, the neighborhood has
7 some of the highest residential eviction rates in
8 the city with surrounding Kingsbridge merchants
9 already facing commercial landlord harassment.
10 Skeptic and champions of this project alike surely
11 could agree that a project that quote "puts the
12 Bronx on the map" cannot also simultaneously have
13 no impact on these existing trends and conditions.

14

15 I would ask that the EIS include
16 and be guided by assumptions that the project will
17 have substantial impacts on the community, rather
18 than assume minimal negative impacts and be
19 unprepared for them should they arise in the
20 future.

21

22 Two, I would be willing and able
23 to be clear about these impacts, and then when
24 we're clear about them, we're able to propose known
25 evidence-based solutions that have been proven to
26 reduce and counteract prevailing trends that
27 produce and induce displacement of working-class
28 residents and merchants. These stabilizing

1

2 strategies are all encompassed under frameworks
3 such as community wealth building, community
4 ownership that were included in the vision document
5 precisely for these reasons. Namely, that they
6 would counteract expected trends of displacement
7 among residential and small business tenants.

8 Like the precedent-setting vision
9 document that we created for this project, I sat on
10 the community working group, the EIS can also set a
11 precedent for including the kinds of models and
12 solutions that communities across the country are
13 using to stabilize their neighborhoods so that they
14 can minimize the negatives in new development,
15 while capturing positive long-term -- positive
16 value for long-term residents.

17 It is also crucial that this EIS
18 thoroughly study, not just whether or not there
19 will be indirect displacement, we know that there
20 will be, but how we can collectively and creatively
21 address and overcome it as a community. Thank you.

22 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
23 much, Evan, for your testimony. Moving on to
24 Sandra Lobo. Sandra, are you ready to speak?

25 MS. LOBO: I am.

1

2

CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. You may

3

start.

4

MS. LOBO: Thank you. Good

5

evening. My name is Sandra Lobo, I'm the Executive

6

Director of the Northwest Bronx Community Clergy

7

Coalition, and I have lived, worked, and worshiped

8

in the Bronx for over 30 years, raising my two

9

children, Emilio (phonetic) and Thiago (phonetic.)

10

The Northwest Bronx has been

11

organizing in the Bronx for 50 years, fighting for

12

reach of economic and environmental justice

13

alongside our communities. We represent over 5,000

14

families, including tenants, students, workers, and

15

small businesses. For over three decades, we have

16

worked to ensure the Kingsbridge Armory is

17

developed equitably so that those who endured

18

redlining and disinvestment directly benefit from

19

the economic development project.

20

As a co-chair of NYCEDCs together

21

for Kingsbridge working Group, Northwest Bronx

22

helped galvanize thousands of residents to shape

23

the vision for the Armory's future. Tonight, I

24

urge the city and the developers to ensure this

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project truly delivers for the Bronx.

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The Armory is not just a building, it is historic community asset that must benefit our community and not displace it. We need good jobs with strong labor standards, this means union labor, not just for construction as mandated by the RFP, but also for long-term operations.

We need pathways to good paying careers for Bronx residents and workforce development programs that connect local youth and workers to opportunities at the Armory. We must prevent displacement and protect small businesses.

Economic growth generated by this redevelopment cannot come at the cost of our community stability. The environmental review must examine risks of gentrification and propose measures to prevent displacement.

This project must also prioritize community ownership and shared wealth building. The Armory should not become another development controlled by outside investors. We demand a governance structure that includes community voices and decision-making, and a plan for revenue sharing that reinvests in local needs through equitable ownership structures.

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You must ensure high environmental standards and climate resilience. The environmental review must examine how this project will reduce emissions, improve air quality, and integrate green infrastructure.

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The Armory should be a model for sustainability, not another contributor to environmental injustice in the borough already facing some of the highest asthma rates in the country.

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19

Finally, we urge the city to conduct a thorough study of all social, economic, and environmental impacts to ensure that this project does not leave our community behind. If an issue is not included in this scoping document, it will not be studied or addressed in the final plan. This is why we are here tonight to ensure our priorities and concerns are heard and incorporated.

20

21

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23

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25

The Bronx cannot afford another broken promise. We call on the city and the developers to commit to a project that centers community ownership, guarantees strong labor and anti-displacement protections, and ensures that the Armory becomes a true asset for the people who

1

2 live, work, and build their lives here in the
3 Bronx. Thank you.

4

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
5 much, Sandra, for your comments. The next person
6 is Robin Rollan, and I think I saw Robin just --

7

MR. ROLLAN: Hi.

8

CHAIR BRUNNER: -- during the
9 meeting. Hello.

10

MR. ROLLAN: Hello everyone, and
11 thank you. Good evening. My name is Robin Rollan,
12 I am a Bronx native, and resident of Kingsbridge
13 for the past 20 years. And I'm living just a few
14 blocks from the Armory. I serve on Community Board
15 7, and on the board of the Northwest Bronx
16 Community and Clergy Coalition, an organization
17 that has championed community-driven development at
18 the Kingsbridge Armory for the past 30 years.

19

I'm here today to advocate for
20 community ownership and revenue sharing in the
21 Armory's redevelopment. While I appreciate the
22 recent unveiling of the current plan for the Armory
23 and the commitment of public officials, it's
24 crucial that the project truly benefits the
25 existing community, not outside interests that have

1

2 historically displaced and disenfranchised Bronx
3 residents.

4

5 For months, our community
6 gathered, providing input on what we wanted for the
7 Armory. This collective vision is outlined in the
8 EDC's vision document.

8

9 I urge you to ensure that the core
10 components of the document are not just
11 acknowledged, but actively incorporated in this
12 project. The environmental review for this project
13 must include a thorough analysis, a community
14 ownership model, specifically including a Community
15 Land Trust, CLT. This is -- this will ensure that
16 the long-term benefits of the Armory development go
17 to the people who live here.

17

18 Furthermore, we need a robust
19 study of revenue-sharing mechanisms. This analysis
20 should determine how the project's financial gains
21 can be reinvested in vital local initiatives or
22 schools, parks, affordable housing, art spaces, and
23 broader community development.

23

24 Finally, and perhaps most
25 importantly, this project requires long-term
community-driven governance structures. We need

1
2 mechanisms that guarantee accountability and
3 equity, ensuring that voices of Kingsbridge
4 residents are heard and that their needs are
5 prioritized throughout the entire process. We want
6 to avoid a repeat of past urban development
7 projects - sorry, projects that prioritize profit
8 over people.

9 The Kingsbridge Armory represents
10 a unique opportunity to demonstrate how development
11 can truly serve a community. We must seize it.
12 Thank you very much.

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
14 much, Robin, for your testimony. We're moving on
15 to Christian Ramos. I think I saw you already.
16 Christian, can you hear us?

17 MR. RAMOS: I hear you -- I hear
18 you.

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. Great.
20 Welcome.

21 MR. RAMOS: Well, no problem.
22 Yes. My name is Christian Ramos. I'm an active
23 member of Kingsbridge Merchant Association, and I'm
24 here today as a business owner, and also I have my
25 store in the third generation of the stores over

1

2 here on Kingsbridge Road for long term. And I
3 would like to say a couple words in the name of the
4 merchants.

5 In the name of our commercial
6 corridor, I want to tell thanks for coming to our
7 neighbor. We are excited to have you join our
8 community. Our community's diversity different --
9 every day we have a different place from people,
10 but I would like to say thank you to you guys to
11 come, and the big sample that you has is the 2530
12 Grand Concourse, it's a call in the clock -- the
13 clock hour. Make sure that things like this is not
14 just a building, is a structure, it's something
15 that's a part of our community.

16 Now, it is Fine Fare supermarket,
17 it's a big supermarket. We want to highlight the
18 importance of collaboration together to benefit the
19 whole neighborhood in the voice of our merchants
20 and in honor of them, we're confident that your
21 project will be available as said to our corridor.
22 This project will be impact our commercial
23 corridor, and has many effect and impact, all the
24 small businesses owner.

25 Only thing we want to know is that

1
2 you guys, when you come to the neighborhood as a
3 small business owner, we don't want to be
4 displaced, we don't want to be outside of the
5 neighborhood. A small business owner on corridor
6 we had for years and decades fighting a struggle.
7 And when we see some projects that is coming to our
8 neighborhood, we going to be successful. Not only
9 the big place, also the small stores too. Thank
10 you so much.

11 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
12 much, Christian, for your testimony. Moving on to
13 Caesar Tobar-Acosta, are you present, Caesar, and
14 ready to speak?

15 MR. TOBAR-ACOSTA: Hello
16 everybody.

17 CHAIR BRUNNER: Hello. Good
18 evening. You may get started.

19 MR. TOBAR-ACOSTA: Good evening.
20 My name is Caesar, and I'm a community organizer
21 with Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy
22 Coalition. I've been a part of the Kingsbridge
23 community for 28 years, and served as a member of
24 the Together for Kingsbridge Working Group in my
25 prior role.

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Throughout my life, I have seen this literal center of my community remain empty and only activated in times of emergency. While many of us are cautiously optimistic about the project's potential to align with goals and priorities outlined in the EDC vision document, there are also many questions about the selective proposal and its impacts on our community.

When asked about the high environmental standards and mitigating factors related to air pollution and asthma rates, that Together for Kingsbridge working Group was assured that the project would abide by the highest lead standards. This is a good start but we must go further.

I'm here today to advocate that the new development upholds high environmental standards, and priority susceptible technologies, and green building practices.

Specifically, the project must include energy-efficient designs, renewable energy systems, and strategies to reduce the carbon footprint of the construction and operations. The environmental impact assessments should examine how

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2 this development can enhance climate resiliency for
3 the Bronx, including storm management -- storm
4 water management systems, urban greening and air
5 quality improvements, and also measures to mitigate
6 heat islands and improve business -- or building
7 installations should be prioritized to address our
8 community's vulnerabilities to climate change.

9 Environmental decisions must
10 positively impact both the local community and the
11 broader environment, ensuring that the development
12 serves as a model for sustainable urban
13 development.

14 I urge you to ensure that the
15 enhanced climate resiliency measures for the Bronx
16 are studied thoroughly and incorporated into the
17 project's design.

18 The Kingsbridge Armory
19 redevelopment represents a rare opportunity to
20 uplift the Bronx, and it is essential that this
21 project reflects our community's visions for good
22 jobs, anti-displacement, community ownerships, and
23 sustainability.

24 Thank you so much for allowing me
25 to speak this evening, and I hope you have a

1

2 wonderful rest of your night.

3 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
4 Caesar, for your comments. I'm moving on to the
5 next speaker, and this is Christina Callendar.
6 Christina, are you present?

7 Sorry folks. I actually am
8 reading the next 10 people not just call on
9 Christina, so give me a moment, Christina.

10 So the next 10 speakers will
11 include Christina Callendar. Thank you. Paula
12 Segal, Brenda Irizarry, Deury Ramirez, Luis
13 Cabrera, Crystal Garcia, Angel Arias, Nori Ortega
14 Bailey, Miledys Guzman, and Daniel Ranells.

15 So calling on Christina Callendar
16 as the first speaker of that next group of 10.
17 Christina, are you present?

18 (No response.)

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Doesn't
20 seem to be. Moving on then to the next speaker.
21 Paula Segal. Is Paula present? I'll give it a
22 moment. Paula?

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIR BRUNNER: Not here either.
25 Moving on then to Brenda Irizarry. Brenda, are you

1

2 present and ready to speak?

3 MS. IRIZARRY: I'm here, yes.

4 MS. BRUNNER: Great, great.

5 MS. IRIZARRY: Thank you so much.

6 All right. Good evening, everyone. My name is
7 Brenda Irizarry, I am a member of the Northwest
8 Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition since 1984. I
9 have lived in the Bronx for 57 years.

10 I would like to take this
11 opportunity to comment on the developer's draft
12 scope of work for the Kingsbridge Armory. Although
13 several elements of the Together for Kingsbridge
14 Vision Plan are included, community ownership and
15 revenue sharing must be addressed.

16 I urge the developer to do the
17 following. Conduct a study of community ownership
18 models, such as a Community Land Trust so that
19 neighborhood residents and businesses aren't
20 displaced, as well as benefit from the Armory's
21 redevelopment. Explore revenue-sharing options to
22 determine how the redevelopment project can
23 reinvest in local administrative, such as schools,
24 parks, and affordable housing. Above all, include
25 long-term community-driven governance structures to

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2 ensure accountability and equity.

3

4 In closing, community ownership,
5 governance, and revenue sharing are essential to
6 the community's vision plan of the Kingsbridge
7 Armory. The Armory's redevelopment must ensure
8 that residents, merchants, community, religious,
9 and union organizations are valued partners as well
10 as decision-makers. Thank you.

11

12 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you. I'm
13 calling on Deury Ramirez, are you present and ready
14 to speak?

15

(No response.)

16

17 CHAIR BRUNNER: Let's give it a
18 moment. Deury Ramirez. Doesn't seem to be here,
19 so we will call on you later. The speaker after
20 that is Luis Cabrera. Is Luis here?

21

(No response.)

22

23 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Waiting for
24 Luis Cabrera. Not either. Then I move on to
25 Crystal Garcia. Is Crystal present?

26

(No response.)

27

28 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Last call.
29 Crystal Garcia.

30

(No response.)

1

2 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. We'll call
3 on Crystal later on. The next speaker listed is
4 Angel Arias. Angel, are you here?

5 (No response.)

6 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Is Angel
7 Arias present?

8 (No response.)

9 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Moving to
10 Nori Ortega Bailey. Nori Ortega Bailey, are you
11 present?

12 (No response.)

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then
14 Miledys Guzman. The next speaker would be me
15 Miledys Guzman, are you present?

16 (No response.)

17 CHAIR BRUNNER: Right. Then the
18 next speaker on the list is Daniel Ranells. Is
19 Daniel here?

20 MR. RANELLS: Yes. Hi, can you
21 hear me?

22 CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes, I can hear
23 you, Daniel. Welcome. You may start with your
24 testimony.

25 MR. RANELLS: Thank you. My name

1

2 is Daniel Ranells, and I'm a part of the Northwest
3 Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. I've lived
4 in the -- worked in the Bronx for over 18 years at
5 Bronx Science and now the Bronx River Alliance, and
6 have been a part of the Northwest Bronx community
7 for over five years.

8 I know our community has been
9 working towards a community-driven development at
10 the Kingsbridge Armory for over 30 years. And
11 while many of us are cautiously optimistic about
12 the goals and priorities published in the EDC
13 vision document, there are also so many questions
14 about the actual proposal selected, and how it will
15 implement those goals and visions and impact our
16 community.

17 So I'm here to advocate that the
18 new development exceeds high environmental
19 standards and prioritizes sustainable technologies
20 and green building practices. Specifically, the
21 project must include energy-efficient designs,
22 renewable energy systems and strategies to reduce
23 the carbon footprint of construction, and while the
24 building is an operation.

25 The environmental impact

1

2 assessment should study how the development can
3 lead and exceed in investing in climate resiliency
4 for the Bronx, including storm water management
5 systems, expanding tree canopy, and improving air
6 quality.

7 As we invest in our future, we
8 need to ensure that Bronx residents are included in
9 the development and construction, and have access
10 to good-paying jobs, workforce development, and
11 apprenticeships. We ask that any environmental
12 decisions positively impact both the local
13 community and the broader environment, ensuring
14 this development serves as the model for
15 sustainable urban development.

16 Thank you for the opportunity to
17 speak today. The Kingsbridge Armory redevelopment
18 represents a once in once in a generation
19 opportunity to uplift and invest in the Bronx. And
20 it is essential that this project follows through
21 on our community's vision for good jobs,
22 anti-displacement, community ownership, and
23 sustainability.

24 I urge you to ensure these areas
25 are studied thoroughly and incorporated into the

1

2 project's design. We look forward to working
3 together to make this vision a reality. Thank you.

4 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
5 Daniel, for your testimony. So I'm jumping back to
6 all the people in this group of 10 who were not
7 present or not responding, just to make sure
8 they're not here waiting to testify. And we'll
9 also call them later during this meeting. So
10 jumping back to the first person, Christina
11 Callendar. Christina Callendar, are you present
12 and ready to speak?

13 (No response.)

14 CHAIR BRUNNER: Doesn't seem so.
15 Moving on to Paula Segal. Paula, are you here?

16 (No response.)

17 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Moving on
18 to Deury Ramirez, are you present?

19 (No response.)

20 CHAIR BRUNNER: Next person is
21 Luis Cabrera?

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIR BRUNNER: Not here. Crystal
24 Garcia?

25 (No response.)

1

2 CHAIR BRUNNER: Angel Arias, are
3 you present?

4 (No response.)

5 CHAIR BRUNNER: Nori Ortega
6 Bailey?

7 (No response.)

8 CHAIR BRUNNER: And Miledys
9 Guzman.

10 (No response.)

11 CHAIR BRUNNER: It seems like all
12 these people are not currently present, so we're
13 moving on to the next group of 10, and we'll get
14 back to calling out is names later on.

15 The next group of 10 are Vivian
16 Carter, Margaret Groarke, Nicholas Rosario, Tara
17 Carr, Mercedes Ramirez, Nathan DeJesus, Sandra
18 Jenkins, Zunilda Vasquez, Learine Suazo, and Carlos
19 Lopez. I'm first calling on Vivian Carter.
20 Vivian, are you present?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIR BRUNNER: Is Vivian here?

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. I'm moving
25 on to Margaret Groarke.

1

2

MS. GROARKE: Hi.

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Hello, Margaret.

4

Welcome. You may start with your testimony.

5

MS. GROARKE: Thank you for having

6

me and for having this hearing. My name is

7

Margaret Groarke, I am a board member of the

8

Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition.

9

I'm the President of the Ford Independence Park

10

Neighborhood Association, and I teach at Manhattan

11

University in the Bronx.

12

I've lived near the Kingsbridge

13

Armory my entire life and it has been an underused

14

resource in our community for pretty much that

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entire time. I have been looking forward greatly

16

to a redevelopment plan for the building, but it

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needs to be a plan that really integrally includes

18

the local community. It needs to be a plan that

19

includes activities that are beneficial to the

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local community, job opportunities, and training

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opportunity for jobs that are available to people

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in the local community, to be a building that

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environmentally benefits, and not harms the local

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community.

25

I think these are all things that

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2 need to be looked at in the EIS, the integration
3 with local -- the current local businesses, is not
4 a help to our local community if a business in this
5 new building destroys an existing healthy business.
6 And I think the economic development and the job
7 opportunities at this building need to be something
8 that are carefully examined in this new proposal.

9 Also, you know, looking back at
10 the vision plan, you know, there were several
11 hearings with 4,000 participants over the course of
12 many months that the EDC organized. And out of
13 that came a vision statement about what was
14 important in the new building. Some of them are
15 things I already mentioned, another is
16 opportunities for community ownership and
17 development of community wealth.

18 And so, I think in the EIS, there
19 needs to be some examination of how -- what the
20 proposed developer proposes to do would meet those
21 goals. You know, it is -- it is a no benefit to
22 the community if we build this in a way where it
23 becomes an isolated castle where things are
24 happening that don't bring benefit to those of us
25 who live nearby.

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Thank you very much for holding
this hearing.

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
Margaret, for your comments. I'm moving on to the
next person who is Nicholas Rosario. Are you
present, Nicholas?

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MR. ROSARIO: Yes. Hello?

CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes, now I hear
you too. Okay, great. You may start, please.

MR. ROSARIO: Hello. My name is
Nicholas Rosario, and I have lived in the Bronx for
over 17 years of my life. I'm a part of the
Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and
Sisters and Brothers United.

We have been working towards a
community-driven development at the Kingsbridge
Armory for over 30 years now. For me, the
Kingsbridge Armory is important because it has been
a part of my entire life. I had always passed by
every now and then when I was younger, but I really
started to notice it when I started my high school
experience. I went to high school in Walton
Campus, which if you didn't know, is a one-minute
walk away from the Armory.

1
2 For a majority of my high school
3 experience, I had never known what the Armory held.
4 I always thought it had to be important since it
5 commanded so much attention, the big gates keeping
6 people out, and the large area space that it
7 covered. It was until -- it was only until my
8 senior year of high school when I learned what it
9 was holding; nothing. It was only ever used for
10 like movie sets and exhibitions. It was completely
11 empty inside? What? It felt like a slap to the
12 face to learn this.

13 After all, I constantly saw my
14 community on the sidewalk, markets and people
15 cramped together, just for this big empty building
16 to be taking up all of the space, pushing the
17 community out. Hearing how it's finally going to
18 be in use, I'm ecstatic to see my community finally
19 going to have a space, and be able to be -- be able
20 to have some of our troubles worked on.

21 I hope the Armory can be a space
22 for our community to help us. That is why I'm here
23 to advocate the following: the environmental review
24 must include an analysis of community ownership
25 models such as the Community Land Trust, to ensure

1

2 Bronx residents benefit from the Armory
3 redevelopment; to revenue sharing mechanisms must
4 be studied to determine how the project can
5 reinvest in local initiatives like schools, parks,
6 and affordable housing; the project should
7 prioritize long-term community-driven governance
8 structures to ensure accountability and equity.

9 Thank you all for giving me the
10 opportunity to speak today. The Kingsbridge Armory
11 represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to
12 invest in the Bronx, and it is important that this
13 project reflects our community's visions for good
14 jobs, anti-displacement, community ownership, and
15 sustainability.

16 I urge you to ensure that the core
17 components in the EDC vision document are included
18 in this -- into the project. Thank you once again.

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
20 Nicholas. The next person on the list is Tara
21 Carr. Tara, are you present?

22 MS. CARR: I am, yes.

23 CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes. Great. You
24 may start, please.

25 MS. CARR: Thank you. Good

1
2 evening everyone. My name is Tara Carr, and I was
3 born and raised in the Bronx, New York. I attend
4 in Creston Avenue Baptist Church on Fordham Road.
5 I always worked and shopped in my neighborhood, as
6 well as witnessed the changes from familiar
7 neighbor -- familiar neighbors, leaving to new
8 business entering my neighborhood. With all this
9 being said, I've been in Bronx like for over 30
10 years. I'm actually a little older than that, but
11 -- yeah.

12 I'm here to -- I'm here today
13 testifying on behalf of our Kingsbridge Armory,
14 because I want to make sure everything that, we,
15 the community, verbally make known, the ideas that
16 we came up with in the working group workshops, to
17 now be heard directly from our mouths and must be
18 reflected in the proposal.

19 Now, I heard about the Kingsbridge
20 Armory project in late '22 by a friend of mine
21 named Tobie Buford, who's also here, going to
22 testify. And because I always walk by the Armory
23 for years and wondering why it's not being used, I
24 know there's major history and things that we can
25 do and how we can be very impactful. So that's why

1

2 I've been in all the working groups, I know all our
3 ideas as stated from everyone who's been here
4 testifying. And I want to make sure that everyone
5 is held accountable, including the developers.

6 I am tired of hearing that
7 something's going to happen and doesn't happen. It
8 needs to happen and it's going to happen, and I'm
9 here to be one of the witness who lives in this
10 community to make sure that it happened. Thank you
11 so much. Goodnight.

12 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you, Tara,
13 very much for your testimony. The next person on
14 the list is Mercedes Ramirez. Is Mercedes present?

15 (No response.)

16 CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. I
17 guess not. The next speaker will be Nathan
18 DeJesus. Is Nathan here?

19 (No response.)

20 CHAIR BRUNNER: Nathan, are you
21 present?

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. Then
24 we have Sandra Jenkins. Is Sandra present?

25 (No response.)

1

2

CHAIR BRUNNER: Right. Moving to

3

Zunilda Vasquez. Is Zunilda Vasquez present?

4

(No response.)

5

CHAIR BRUNNER: Not either. Then

6

Learine Suazo.

7

(No response.)

8

CHAIR BRUNNER: And Carlos Lopez.

9

Is Carlos here?

10

(No response.)

11

CHAIR BRUNNER: All right.

12

Doesn't seem to be here either. So I'm moving

13

back. I'm calling on Vivian Carter. Is Vivian

14

here and ready to speak?

15

MS. CARTER: Yes, I'm here.

16

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hello Vivian, you

17

may start with your testimony.

18

MS. CARTER: Good evening. My name

19

is Vivian Carter, and I am a member of the

20

Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition.

21

I've lived in the Bronx for nearly 10 years, and

22

have also worked in the borough for about half of

23

those years.

24

My Bronx life in the past 10 years

25

has included living in a rent-stabilized building

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2 in Riverdale, worshiping at Christchurch Riverdale
3 Episcopal, working for a Bronx City Council member
4 in Kingsbridge, working as a staff member at a
5 local newspaper in the Northwest Bronx, the Norwood
6 News, and working as a grant writer at Women's
7 Housing and Economic Development Corporation in the
8 South Bronx.

9 Community groups, particularly the
10 coalition, have been working towards a
11 community-driven development at the Kingsbridge
12 Armory for over 30 years, long before I arrived in
13 the Bronx. I learned about their efforts while
14 working on stories at the Norwood News, and I
15 became a member of the coalition soon after.

16 I deepened my involvement over the
17 years, volunteering for health justice, housing,
18 and voter power committees. There's a great deal
19 of grassroots work happening throughout the Bronx,
20 largely through the coalition's efforts. The
21 Kingsbridge Armory is important to the coalition
22 and to me personally, because it represents a rare
23 opportunity for a public-private partnership,
24 benefiting residents and businesses in the Bronx.

25 We need more affordable housing,

1

2 quality union jobs, and economic development that
3 is innovative, energy-efficient, and tailored to
4 the needs of one of the most underserved areas of
5 the five boroughs of New York City, the Bronx. We
6 need economic development that nurtures existing
7 small businesses, not development that pushes them
8 out.

9

I'm joining today to advocate that
10 the EDC fully study the impact on the community of
11 this proposal so that it reflects the coalition's
12 core values. One of those values that's most
13 important to me is community ownership and revenue
14 sharing.

15

Too often we see developers like
16 MADD building housing that's profitable for them,
17 but not truly affordable for working-class
18 residents of the city. I now live in a small
19 stabilized apartment in Riverdale, and plan to
20 retire and live on social security within the next
21 few years. The landlord's trying to force tenants
22 in my building out right now, so it can sell the
23 building and knock it down to build something
24 bigger at much higher rents. This way of operating
25 has to end.

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I'm tired of seeing studios and one-bedroom apartments no bigger than a hotel room being offered as so-called affordable apartments, though they are renting for \$1,500 or more a month, and only the lucky who win a housing lottery can even get into those.

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The Kingsbridge Armory represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in the Bronx, and it's important that the project reflects our community's vision for good jobs, anti-displacement, community ownership, and sustainability.

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I urge you to ensure the core components and the vision document are included in the project. That's the only way you can achieve wide community buy-in for this project. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much, Vivian, for your testimony. We're moving on to the next group of 10, which you can see on your screens right now. This group includes Sarah Garrison, Jane Bedell, Matthew Shore, Diletta Pina, Ava Harris, Jennifer Salgado, Jonathan Halabi, Tobie Buford, Victor Alvarez, and Allison Manuel.

1

2 So calling on Sarah Garrison, the
3 first of those 10 speakers. Is Sarah present?

4 MS. GARRISON: Sure. Can you hear
5 me okay?

6 CHAIR BRUNNER: I hear you. Yeah,
7 I hear you, Sarah. You may start. Thank you.

8 MS. GARRISON: Okay. Great. So
9 my name is Dr. Sarah Garrison, and I've been a
10 proud resident of the Bronx for over 40 years.
11 I've lived in the Kingsbridge Armory neighborhood
12 for 30 years, during which I've raised two children
13 and had much of my professional career as Chief of
14 Primary Care at North Central Bronx Hospital, and
15 as Chief of Staff at the Bronx VA, which is very
16 close to the Armory.

17 So for these de decades, I've
18 observed the ups and the downs of the plans for the
19 Armory and have always advocated for community
20 leadership and ownership of the Armory. As a
21 physician, a scientist, and a mother, stewardship
22 and protection of the environment is of utmost
23 importance to me. Environmental protection is
24 critical both in terms of the health of the -- of
25 our community now and in terms of addressing

1

2 climate change for all of us and the futures of our
3 children.

4 I decided to testify today to
5 advocate that the new development of Kingsbridge
6 Armory models the highest environmental standards,
7 and prioritizes sustainable technologies and green
8 building practices. The two specific requests I
9 have are first, that the project must include
10 energy-efficient designs, renewable energy systems,
11 and strategies to reduce the carbon footprint of
12 construction and operations.

13 More broadly, the environmental
14 impact assessment should study how this development
15 can enhance climate resiliency for the Bronx. This
16 would include urban greening, air quality
17 improvements as we heard from previous presenter,
18 and storm water management systems, among others.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to
20 speak today. The Kingsbridge Armory represents a
21 once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to put the Bronx on
22 the map for climate justice. It is critical that
23 this project reflects our community's vision for
24 environmental sustainability, climate justice, and
25 protection of the environment for future

1
2 generations.

3 Again, as a physician, a
4 scientist, a mother, and a neighborhood resident, I
5 urge you to ensure that the core components of the
6 EDC vision are adhered to. We owe this to each
7 other, and we owe this to our children. Thank you.

8 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
9 Sarah, for your comments. I'm moving on to Jane
10 Bidell. Is Jane present?

11 MS. BIDE LL: I am here. Can you
12 hear me?

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes, I hear you,
14 Jane. You may get started.

15 MS. BIDE LL: All right, ready to
16 go. Hello, my name is Dr. Jane Bedell. I'm a
17 primary care, and a public health physician. I'm
18 also a lifelong New Yorker, and I'm now retired
19 after years in clinical medicine, most of them in
20 the Bronx, and nearly two decades of service
21 working for the New York City Health Department in
22 the Bronx office.

23 I have lived in the Bronx for the
24 past 34 years, I've raised my two children here,
25 and I represent the Fort Independent Neighborhood

1

2 Association in Kingsbridge Heights on the board of
3 the Northwest Bronx Clergy Coalition -- community
4 and Clergy Coalition. My family lives in the
5 shadow of the Armory.

6 It's across from the reservoir
7 from our home. I have passed by it almost daily on
8 my commute to work, and my son attended the High
9 School for American Studies, which is down the
10 block from the Armory. And we all take walks,
11 runs, bike rides around the reservoir, passing the
12 Armory as we go.

13 For over 30 years, our family has
14 watched the plan stop stall progress in air quotes
15 around the Armory. My two children were born in
16 the early stages of this chapter of the Armory
17 development. They were raised here and now they're
18 adults. No Armory yet. Maybe this time we'll be
19 successful.

20 So today I joined with so many
21 others here today that are talking about the need
22 to advocate for the exploration and adoption of
23 mechanisms for community ownership and revenue
24 sharing.

25 For far too long, New Yorkers,

1
2 especially Bronx sites, have been crushed by
3 conventional models. Tenant, landlord, real estate
4 developer, worker, business owner, homeowner,
5 finance capital banks, these that have profit
6 making as their highest goal, and they've pushed us
7 inevitably, the workers, the tenants, the
8 homeowners to the side.

9 This project offers the chance to
10 develop alternative models, and then to honor the
11 community engagement process for community land
12 trust, worker-owned businesses, worker
13 cooperatives, revenue sharing mechanisms.

14 So, I urge the developer to
15 conduct a thorough study of community ownership
16 models, and act on the conclusion of the study with
17 full attention to choosing viable projects that
18 will exemplify community-driven and community
19 ownership models. This armory project could be a
20 model for the nation, not just the Bronx and New
21 York City, but the nation. But we have to let it
22 develop and we have to be very clear and careful in
23 how we do that.

24 I appreciate that I'm here with so
25 many neighbors, colleagues, elected officials, city

1

2 staff. I once was on the city staff who are here
3 today, and I hope this testimony helps make all of
4 us, but particularly the developer and the funders
5 in the city, accountable to the community needs and
6 community engagement. Thank you so much for the
7 opportunity to submit my testimony today.

8 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
9 much, Jane, for your comments. The next person on
10 the list is Matthew Shore. Is Matthew here and
11 ready to speak?

12 MR. SHORE: Hello?

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: Hello, Matthew,
14 you may get started.

15 MR. SHORE: Okay, good evening.
16 My name is Matthew Shore, pronouns, he, him. Born
17 in the Bronx, raised on Creston Avenue in Bedford
18 Park, and currently living in Kingsbridge. I'm a
19 member of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy
20 Coalition, and I'm a community organizer in the
21 South Bronx.

22 While it was powerful to join
23 hundreds to thousands of community members and pack
24 in the rooms for the together for Kingsbridge
25 Public Vision and Sessions and shaping the

1

2 priorities published in the EDCs vision document in
3 2023, including maximizing community ownership, I
4 share many of the same questions my community has
5 about the selected proposal and its impacts on our
6 area.

7 The vibrancy of Kingsbridge Road
8 and the strength of its local economy can be
9 attributed to its local residents, most of whom are
10 working class, and 100 plus mom-and-pop shops and
11 street vendors, most of which are bipod and
12 immigrant-owned. Therefore, the Armory project
13 must both protect and uplift us.

14 Through my experience supporting
15 Northwest Bronx Community Clergy Coalition with its
16 work in reviving the Kingsbridge Road Merchant
17 Association, I urge the city to study and
18 incorporate the following in regards to CEQR.

19 One, study the developments
20 impacts on local small businesses, particularly
21 those at risk of displacement. In 2014, we saw a
22 number of small businesses on Kingsbridge road face
23 doubled and tripled rents shortly after the
24 Kingsbridge National Eye Center, a.k.a KNEC, was
25 approved.

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Today we see many small businesses on Kingsbridge Road that lack leases and who are paying rent month to month, making it difficult to stay in place and qualify for financial assistance in the form of grants and loans.

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Several businesses across the street from the Armory at 2 -- from 2 to 12 West Kingsbridge Road, who are all under the same landlord currently have a for sale sign, and I'm concerned that they will fall victim to real estate speculation, potentially leaving the community without housing debt -- potentially leaving the community with housing debt isn't truly affordable to the local community or with businesses that are not locally owned and that don't provide affordable products and services?

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Number two, include street vendors in your analysis of small business displacement. We love our street vendors, and it's concerning to see how many of them have recently experienced street sweeps through the past one to two years.

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Lastly and crucially, at Bronx Community District 7, approximately 6 percent of people own their homes, far below the Bronx and

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2 Citywide averages. And the community district
3 ranks in the top four community districts citywide
4 for displacement pressures on local residents from
5 predatory landlords.

6 We've seen a large resonance, and
7 community development projects across the city have
8 displaced residents, such as with the Barclays
9 Arena in Brooklyn, and we don't want that here.
10 The Armory's project must reflect our community's
11 vision for economic democracy and community
12 ownership. Thank you for your time.

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
14 much, Matthew, for your comments. Moving on to
15 Dilette Pina is Dilette here?

16 MS. PINA: I am.

17 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. You may
18 start your testimony.

19 MS. PINA: Sure. My name is
20 Diletta Pina, and I am part of the Northwest Bronx
21 Community and Clergy Coalition. I have been a part
22 of this community for nearly 44 years. We have
23 been working towards a community-driven development
24 at the Kingsbridge Armory for over 30 years.

25 While many of us are consciously

1
2 optimistic about its potential to address the goals
3 and priorities published in the EBC Vision
4 document, there are also many questions about the
5 actual proposal selected, and its impact on our
6 community. For decades, we have fought for
7 economic justice in the Bronx, and the Kingsbridge
8 Armory redevelopment must deliver high-quality jobs
9 for local residents.

10 I am here today to advocate for
11 the inclusion of strong workforce development, and
12 good union jobs in the project scope, including; a
13 project label agreement that guarantees union labor
14 for construction and operations; a clear pathway
15 for Bronx residents, especially youth and
16 underemployed workers to access good paying job to
17 targeted training programs and apprenticeship;
18 long-term commitments to workforce development and
19 partnerships with local organizations, unions, and
20 schools.

21 The environmental review must
22 include a study on how the project will generate
23 high-quality jobs, ensure fair wages, and support a
24 stable local workforce. Thank you for the
25 opportunity to speak today.

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The Kingsbridge Armory

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redevelopment represents a once-in-a-generation

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opportunity to uplift the Bronx. And it's

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essential that this project reflects our

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community's vision for good job, anti-displacement,

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community ownership, and sustainability.

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I urge you to ensure these areas

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are studied thoroughly and incorporated into the

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projects we found. We look forward to working

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together to make this vision a reality. Thank you

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for listening.

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,

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Dilletta, for your testimony. We're moving on to

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Ava Harris. Is Ava here?

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(No response.)

17

CHAIR BRUNNER: Is Ava Harris

18

present?

19

(No response.)

20

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Moving on

21

to Jennifer Salgado.

22

MS. SALGADO: Hello.

23

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hello, Jennifer.

24

Welcome. You may get started with your testimony.

25

MS. SALGADO: Thank you. Good

1

2 evening, everyone. My name is Jennifer Salgado.
3 I'm a lifelong resident of the Kingsbridge
4 neighborhood, and a board member of the Street
5 Vendor Project.

6 While the redevelopments of the
7 Kingsbridge Armory have been long awaited, it's
8 important that we all remain cautious and ensure
9 proper oversight as we enter into this process, to
10 avoid this project becoming just another usher of
11 rapid gentrification in the Bronx.

12 I'm here today to emphasize the
13 importance of ensuring that the Kingsbridge Armory
14 redevelopments truly benefits all small businesses,
15 including street vendors, who are a vital part of
16 our local economy.

17 For decades, our community has
18 fought for a development that uplifts, not
19 displaces, local entrepreneurs. Street vendors
20 like brick-and-mortar businesses provide essential
21 goods and services to our neighbors and contribute
22 to the culture and economy of the Bronx and New
23 York City as a whole. Yet too often, they are
24 excluded and even pushed out from economic
25 development plans.

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As said, the developers, MADDD Equities, better known as 8th Regiment Partners LLC, must commit to fostering relationships with all stakeholders, including street vendors, ensuring that they are part of ongoing conversations and benefit from the opportunities this project creates.

As a resident, I want to echo my neighbor's concerns about affordability. While the need for housing is greater than ever, what we need most is truly affordable housing that reflects the income levels of the surrounding neighborhoods to prevent displacement.

To achieve a truly inclusive and community-driven redevelopment, I urge the city to study and incorporate the development impact on local small businesses, including street vendors, particularly those who risk displacement.

Opportunities for small businesses to secure contracts during construction and operation.

Implement strong anti-displacement protections to safeguard existing businesses from being pushed out by rising costs or restrictive policies.

Conducting a study on the developments plans,

1

2 development's potential to impact housing
3 affordability and displacement in surrounding
4 neighborhoods.

5

The Kingsbridge Armory

6 redevelopments is a once in a generation
7 opportunity. If done right, it can strengthen the
8 Bronx economy from within by investing in all small
9 businesses, including those who make their living
10 on the streets. I urge the city to ensure that
11 this project reflects our community's vision for
12 equitable economic growth. Thank you for your
13 time.

14

CHAIR BRUNNER: Sorry. Thank you,
15 Jennifer, for your comments. Moving on to Jonathan
16 Halabi. Jonathan, are you present and ready to
17 speak? Calling on Jonathan Halabi.

18

(No response.)

19

CHAIR BRUNNER: Moving on to Tobie
20 Buford. Is Tobie here? Okay. Then --

21

MS. BUFORD: Can you hear me?

22

Yes, I'm here. Can you hear me?

23

CHAIR BRUNNER: Oh, yes. Oh, yes,
24 I can hear you, Tobie.

25

MS. BUFORD: Okay, great.

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay, welcome.

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MS. BUFORD: Thank you. Good evening, everyone. My name is Tobie Buford; I have been a member of the Northwest Bronx Community since 1972. I'm also a member of Community Board 7 and county committee member for Assembly District 78.

The Kingsbridge Armory is the largest armory in the United States, yet it remains underutilized. Efforts to revitalize the Armory have failed twice. The good news is we have a revenue stream of \$200 million, which is set aside for its re-birth. The Northwest Bronx community will wait no longer, the time is now.

We met with our electives, we demonstrated our solidarity with the community March, we mean business this time. A community working group was formed, and we worked with members of the Economic Development Corporation to produce a to-do list. We got it done. We developed a vision plan, which includes programs for our youth, centers of hope for our seniors, educational centers, and much, much more. We want the -- we want the Kingsbridge Armory to be

1

2 economically sound.

3

4 So, here's the thing. As we
5 developed together for Kingsbridge, we must not
6 forget the mom-and-pop shops that have rallied --
7 that have rallied to make this community a
8 necessity for decades. I am here today to advocate
9 for the following.

9

10 A creation of a grandfather
11 clause. We would like the developers of the
12 project to meet with our community leaders to
13 develop a grandfather clause that would ensure mom
14 and pops shops leasing opportunities for set 10
15 years, thus ensuring their ability to grow as the
16 community grows.

16

17 Protection for existing
18 businesses. We would like to see the developers
19 incorporate measures to protect existing residents
20 and small businesses through Community Land Trust
21 and rent stabilizations to ensure the success of
22 the community's ability to strive for centuries to
23 come.

23

24 For nearly 30 years, the Armory
25 stood unused. These shopkeepers were the beacon
for meeting the needs of the community. Let's not

1

2 forget their contribution.

3

4 Again, my name is Tobie Buford,
5 and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.
6 There's an opportunity to uplift the Bronx, and is
7 essential that this project reflects our community
8 vision for good jobs, anti-displacement, community
9 ownership, and sustainability. I urge you to
10 ensure these mom and pops shops are given the
11 opportunity to rise as we build our beloved Bronx
12 Kingsbridge Armory together. We look forward to
13 working together to make the vision a reality.
14 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
16 much, Tobie, for your testimony. The next speaker
17 is Victor Alvarez. Is Victor here?

17

18 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes, I'm here.

18

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. You may
20 get started with your testimony.

20

21 MR. ALVAREZ: Okay. Hello. My
22 name is Victor, I'm part of the Northwest Bronx
23 Community and Clergy Coalition. I have been a part
24 of this community for nearly two years. The
25 Northwest Bronx has been organizing around the
Armory for more than 30 years, and many of us in

1

2 the community are concerned about the proposal
3 selected and the impact that it can possibly have
4 on our community.

5 Oftentimes, projects like this
6 create more harm than opportunities for residents.
7 I want the city to ensure that this project doesn't
8 contribute to more displacement and higher rents.
9 Not only for our -- like the local businesses, but
10 also for like the residents, and the community, and
11 it paves the way for like affordable housing
12 solutions. Such as by conducting study on the
13 developer's potential to impact the housing
14 affordability, the displacement in the surrounding
15 neighborhoods, exploring mechanisms that include
16 deeply affordable housing options with the project
17 or near, such as mixed-use development with a
18 strong affordability component, incorporate
19 protections for existing residents and small
20 businesses through Community Land Trust and rent
21 stabilization measures.

22 So this project like must ensure
23 that, you know, the people that have been in the
24 community, given that the diversity that it has,
25 ensures that these people stay in the community and

1

2 are able to benefit from the things that are going
3 to be built here, hopefully.

4 So lastly, I just want to say
5 thank you for the opportunity to speak. The
6 Kingsbridge Armory redevelopment represents a
7 one-in-a-lifetime generation opportunity to uplift
8 the Bronx. And so many times we often see that
9 like, you know, when new redevelopment comes and
10 like new businesses, new opportunities, new
11 endeavors, usually the people that have been here
12 the longest don't really get to like benefit from
13 it.

14 So hopefully, we look forward to
15 working together. And hopefully, this is something
16 that, like, the local people can benefit from. We
17 look forward to working together. Thank you. Have
18 a good one.

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
20 Victor, for your testimony. The next speaker is
21 Allison Manuel. Allison, are you here and ready to
22 provide testimony?

23 MS. MANUEL: Yes, I am.

24 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. You may
25 get started then.

1
2 MS. MANUEL: My name is Allison
3 Manuel, and I am Communications Director of the
4 Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. I
5 have lived and worked in the community for 16
6 years, and during that time, I've seen our
7 community navigate the public review process around
8 the Kingsbridge Armory, working tirelessly to
9 secure the best possible outcome, whether by
10 partnering with the city council to stop a project
11 that was incompatible with our vision, or
12 negotiating a historic community benefits agreement
13 that reflected our priorities. So I have no doubt
14 that in this third round we will again advocate
15 productively and strategically to ensure the
16 Armory's redevelopment serves our community's
17 needs.

18 While you've heard many of us
19 express cautious optimism about its potential to
20 address the priorities published in the EDC vision
21 document, there are still many unanswered questions
22 about the selected proposal and its long-term
23 impact. The visioning process that engaged over
24 4,000 residents and workers made clear that the
25 Armory must be a model for the community -- for

1

2 community ownership and shared prosperity that
3 reflects the Bronx's vibrant culture and economic
4 potential.

5

I'm here today to advocate that
6 the environmental impact study addresses the
7 following.

8

First, revenue-sharing mechanisms
9 must be studied to determine how the project can
10 reinvest in our schools, parks, and affordable
11 housing.

12

Over 30 years our community has
13 dedicated sweat equity, and driven financial
14 resources into the armory. In 2003, our organizing
15 efforts secured \$31 million in public funding to
16 prevent its deterioration, without which this
17 redevelopment would not be possible.

18

Two decades of advocacy later,
19 Governor Hochul and Mayor Adams announced \$200
20 million in public dollars towards this
21 redevelopment.

22

Given our significant public
23 investment, the city must study how this project
24 will directly reinvest back into us, to share
25 profits with us, to sustain us.

1
2 The environmental review must also
3 include an analysis of community ownership models
4 to ensure the Bronx residents benefit directly from
5 the Armory's redevelopment, and stabilize the
6 surrounding community. Shared ownership and
7 decision-making, spread financial risk, while
8 bringing in the sweat equity of those who have the
9 most to gain and lose from the project's success,
10 its users and neighbors.

11 The projects to prioritize
12 long-term community-driven governance structures to
13 ensure accountability and equity. No one has more
14 at stake in the sustainability of the Armory than
15 the people who live here. The community members
16 and workers who will build, patronize, and
17 ultimately sustain this development must share in
18 its wealth, and play a role in decisions that
19 reinvest in the Bronx's long-term health and
20 wellbeing.

21 There is much-untapped potential
22 for events, programming, and businesses that
23 reflect the creativity and cultural identity of the
24 people who already live here, who have built the
25 Bronx into what it is today, rather than

1

2 prioritizing profit for outside interests.

3

4 As the vision doc makes clear, a
5 regenerative local economy that fosters mutually
6 reinforcing economic, social, and environmental
7 benefits will leverage our community's strengths to
8 deliver goods and services that support the
9 Armory's infrastructure and the neighborhood's
10 economic, social, and environmental needs.

11

12 In turn, a strengthened and stable
13 and resilient neighborhood will capture -- will
14 contribute to the long-term success of the Armory.

15

16 These words must not remain
17 abstract concepts on the page. They represent our
18 community's deep wisdom, and align with successful
19 development models across the country and globe.

20

21 And that is why it is crucial that the
22 Environmental Impact Statement thoroughly study how
23 these commitments will be made real at the Armory.
24 We look forward to working together to make it a
25 reality. Thank you.

26

27 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
28 Allison, for your testimony. All right. So I'm
29 just very briefly calling on Ava Harris again to
30 see if she joined and/or is now available. Ava,

1

2 are you here?

3

(No response.)

4

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. And then
5 the same question whether Jonathan Halabi is
6 present.

7

MR. HALABI: Yes, I am.

8

CHAIR BRUNNER: Oh, great,
9 Jonathan. Welcome. Please start your testimony.

10

MR. HALABI: Thank you very much.
11 My name is Jonathan Halabi, I've lived in -- not
12 this neighborhood, in Bedford Park, the adjoining
13 neighborhood since 1992. I worked about three
14 blocks from the Armory, a 20-year career high
15 school on the Lehman College campus. This is the
16 -- this is the Bronx, and there's lots of great
17 things about the Bronx, but we know that we often
18 get considered last. And here we have a really
19 wonderful resource.

20

And people in this community --
21 and I'm part of the Northwest Bronx Coalition, I'm
22 part of my union. People in this community really
23 came together to work on a community benefits
24 agreement to make sure that our voices were heard
25 and were part of this. And now there's an

1

2 agreement, but are you going to make sure that the
3 terms in that agreement are going to be part of
4 what's here? Are our voices going to be heard?

5 I should be sitting in a room with
6 my community members, with the politicians, and
7 with you together. They're not here. I am very
8 concerned that you let us go through the exercise
9 of making this agreement, published it, and that it
10 doesn't have any weight. I call on you to make
11 sure to live up to that agreement, to make sure
12 that it's part of everything that we do, to make
13 sure that our meetings for our community happen in
14 our community, to make sure that our input
15 continues to go into whatever changes are being
16 made in whatever proposals, because there are going
17 to be changes.

18 And that the needs of the
19 community, as the community says, not as you
20 interpret for us, but as our community says,
21 continue to be part of every part of this proposal,
22 that we don't get a document that's frozen in
23 stone, and then you get to do -- and the developer
24 gets to do what they want. But that we, as the
25 people who worked on this community benefits

1

2 agreement, continue to interact with you through
3 this process, with the developer, and with
4 everybody.

5 And the first commitment that I
6 really want to ask from you is that we do not put
7 our community onto a Zoom again. The Bronx is
8 really a great place, we often come last. Don't
9 put us last by having the meetings and offices in
10 Manhattan while we're just seeing you on a
11 computer. Come up here. This is our community,
12 this is our resource, this is our future. Thank
13 you.

14 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you,
15 Jonathan, very much for your testimony.

16 So at this point we will be taking
17 a short 10-minute recess. If you signed up to
18 speak and have not yet had your turn, we will still
19 have your name on the list and we'll be continuing
20 after the break in the same order of speakers. So
21 it is currently 7:01, so we will continue at 7:10
22 after a quick about 10-minute break.

23 (A short recess was taken.)

24 CHAIR BRUNNER: Welcome back,
25 everyone. We will now be resuming the public

1

2 comment period. As a reminder to everyone, each
3 speaker will be allowed three minutes to speak.

4 I'll begin by calling the name of those who have
5 registered to speak, or the last three digits of
6 your phone number, if you are using the telephone
7 dial-in option and not the Zoom app.

8 Please state your name and
9 affiliation, if you have one, for the record. The
10 next 10 speakers are now shown on the screen and
11 their names are; Jonathan German, Grethel Samuel,
12 Danielle Herbert-Guggenheim, Genee Bright, Helen
13 Meltzer-Krim, Roberta Todd, Kendall Jackman,
14 Vicente Veintimilla, Paula Schaap, and Ivan Braun.

15 So I'm first calling on Jonathan
16 German. Is Jonathan present?

17 (No response.)

18 CHAIR BRUNNER: Is Jonathan German
19 here?

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. Moving
22 on to Grethel Samuel. Is Grethel present and ready
23 to speak?

24 (No response.)

25 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Moving on

1

2 to Danielle Herbert-Guggenheim. Is Danielle
3 present?

4

(No response.)

5

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then the
6 next speaker will be Genee Bright. Is Genee Bright
7 here?

8

(No response.)

9

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Moving on
10 to Helen Meltzer-Krim. Is Helen in this meeting?

11

(No response.)

12

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Moving on
13 to Roberta Todd.

14

MS. TODD: Hi, this is Roberta
15 Todd.

16

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hello, Roberta.
17 You may start with your testimony.

18

MS. TODD: Certainly. I am a
19 resident of the Bronx for over 25 years. I live in
20 the (unintelligible) neighborhood, and I'm part of
21 the faith community at Christ Episcopal Church,
22 Riverdale, and since my retirement in 2018, I have
23 been an active member of Northwest Bronx Community
24 and Clergy Coalition.

25

I actively participated in the

1

2 Armory's visioning sessions where I, along with
3 4,000 plus community members, voiced the importance
4 of this redevelopment project, reflecting what is
5 good for the community sustainably, and not
6 displacing community residents or businesses.

7 The Armory should be an economic
8 engine and neighborhood hub that services the
9 community. The Together for Kingsbridge community
10 vision for the future of the Kingsbridge Armory
11 summarizes what the community has prioritized.
12 And Mayor Adam's introduction of the vision, he
13 highlights the importance of working
14 collaboratively.

15 And it's for this reason, I am
16 advocating that there is an assurance of the
17 following as part of the development and outcome of
18 this project.

19 The environmental review must
20 include an analysis of community ownership models
21 that includes Community Land Trust, and also needs
22 to ensure Bronx residents benefit from the Armory
23 redevelopment.

24 There needs to be a clear
25 revenue-sharing mechanism, and it should be studied

1

2 to determine how the project can reinvest to local
3 initiatives like schools, parks, affordable
4 housings, and other things that the community deems
5 valuable.

6

The project should prioritize
7 long-term community-driven governance structure to
8 ensure accountability and equity.

9

Community ownership is essential
10 to ensuring that this development truly uplifts
11 working people in the Bronx. The investments made
12 directly by the government, now we know 200
13 million-plus from State and city, and that's plus,
14 along with -- and we -- I don't know the numbers
15 for this but the allowances and tax breaks that
16 will be given to the developer. All of those are
17 starting points for counting what is the investment
18 of the community in this project. And they should
19 be included to create a concrete community
20 ownership model.

21

Now, I thank you for listening to
22 myself, listening to many of us from Northwest
23 Bronx that are very aware of what is possible. We
24 have looked at models in other places and we know
25 it is possible to do this, and we can do this in

1

2 the Bronx, and we can do this in New York City.

3

4 So I'm thanking you. It's
5 important that this project reflects our
6 community's vision for good jobs,
7 anti-displacement, community ownership, and
8 sustainability. I'm urging that the study consider
9 all of this as it moves forward. Good evening.

9

10 MS. BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
11 Roberta, did I get that right? I'm sorry.

11

12 MS. TODD: Yes, Roberta.

12

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: I did. Right.

13

14 Yes. Okay.

14

15 MS. TODD: Roberta Todd.

15

16 CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes. Thank you,
17 Roberta, for your testimony. Moving on to Kendall
18 Jackman. Is Kendall Jackman present?

18

19 (No response.)

19

20 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Moving on
21 to Vicente Veintimilla. Is Vicente present?

21

22 (No response.)

22

23 CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. Moving
24 on to Paula Schaap. Paula, are you here?

24

25 (No response.)

25

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then moving

1

2 on to Ivan Braun. Is Ivan present in this meeting?

3

(No response.)

4

CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. I'm
5 jumping back to Danielle Herbert-Guggenheim.

6

Danielle, are you here and ready to speak?

7

MS. HERBERT-GUGGENHEIM: I am
8 here. Can you hear me?

9

CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. I do hear
10 you. Mm-hmm (affirmative). You may start your
11 testimony.

12

MS. HERBERT-GUGGENHEIM: My
13 testimony is that COVID highlighted the inequities
14 that have existed in this borough since white
15 flight. What are we going to do with those lessons
16 that COVID has taught us?

17

The Armory is a place for us to
18 have transformational growth for this borough that
19 has suffered, and is not due to lack of people not
20 working hard, it's because mechanisms, systems,
21 policies are no longer in place that would help
22 build our community. So it's important that we are
23 going to create systems and structures that will
24 correct past harms, and understand that it is going
25 to take more for us to be on equal footing.

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9

It's a problem that the median income in the Bronx is \$43,000, compared to the other boroughs. It's a problem that so many of our neighborhoods lack third spaces, community spaces where people can come together. I strongly urge that we understand that we are only doing well when our neighbors are doing well. That's all I have to say.

10

11

12

13

CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. Thank you very much, Danielle, for your -- for your comments. I'm calling on Helen Melzter-Krim next. Helen, are you present and ready to speak?

14

15

MS. MELZTER-KRIM: Yes, I am. Thank you.

16

17

CHAIR BRUNNER: Great. Thank you. You may start.

18

19

20

21

22

MS. MELZTER-KRIM: My name is Helen Krim, I'm a member of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, and of the Riverdale Temple. I was born and grew up on University Avenue, and now live in Riverdale.

23

24

25

My main concern regarding the plan for the Armory concerns the displacement of residents and small businesses. I have seen big

1
2 development projects destroy communities and
3 neighborhoods. Lincoln Center resulted in
4 affordable housing being destroyed and replaced by
5 housing that the original residents were unable to
6 afford. The "Affordable units," that were included
7 brought strangers to the area. The housing was not
8 maintained properly, and because the residents had
9 no ownership stake and no cohesion as a community,
10 the buildings were not maintained.

11 The development also displaced all
12 the small businesses. The nearest big grocery
13 store today is up at 72nd Street, and there are few
14 bodegas, cleaners, hardware stores. You should not
15 need a car to do your shopping. I urge the city to
16 ensure the Armory project contributes to
17 anti-displacement measures and real affordable
18 housing solutions by conducting a study on the
19 developments potential to impact housing
20 affordability and displacement in the surrounding
21 neighborhoods.

22 This project must make it possible
23 for local residents to afford the housing, share in
24 the equity, and for local businesses to afford the
25 new rising rent. While it is important to attract

1

2 new businesses, the jobs created must go to the
3 local residents paid well enough to afford the cost
4 of the new housing.

5 The Bronx is my home and my
6 community. It has been neglected too long, and
7 this development must serve my community. I thank
8 you for the opportunity to express my vision of
9 what good, healthy development must be. I look
10 forward to studying your report.

11 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
12 much, Helen, for your testimony. Next, I am
13 jumping to Ivan Braun. Ivan, are you able to
14 testify now? Are you present actually? Is Ivan
15 Brown present and are you ready to speak?

16 (No response.)

17 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. We will
18 call on Ivan later on then. All right. So just
19 jumping back very quickly to ask for the names of
20 people who seem not to be present, but just make
21 sure that we're not missing anybody. So, Jonathan
22 German? Is Jonathan here, and Grethel Samuel?

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Genee
25 Bright, and Kendall Jackman. Jeannie or Kendall,

1

2 are you here?

3

(No response.)

4

CHAIR BRUNNER: All right then
Vicente Veintimilla and Paula Schaap. Are Vicente
or Paula here?

7

(No response.)

8

CHAIR BRUNNER: Right. And asking
for Ivan again. Ivan Braun, are you here?

10

(No response.)

11

CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. So
we'll call on all of you again later. Then, we're
moving on to our list of the next 10 speakers.
They are Leslie Vasquez, Julie Colon, EB Messineo,
Emma Allota, Dariella Rodriguez, Elizabeth
Thompson, Ana Dominguez, Wanda Salaman, Stefannie
Bonilla, and Jordan Moss.

18

So the first speaker would be
Leslie Vasquez. Is Leslie Present? I'm giving it
a moment hoping Leslie will join or unmute.

21

MS. VASQUEZ: Hi. Thank you. I'm
sorry --

23

CHAIR BRUNNER: Oh, great. Oh, no
problem. Hi, Leslie.

25

MS. VASQUEZ: How are you? How

1

2 are you doing today?

3

4 are you?

5

6 MS. VASQUEZ: Good. My name is
7 Leslie Vasquez, and I'm speaking on behalf of The
8 Point CDC, an organization dedicated to
9 environmental justice, community development, and
equitable development in the Bronx.

10

11 For over 30 years, Bronx residents
12 have fought for community-driven redevelopment of
13 the Kingsbridge Armory that prioritizes the needs
14 of Bronx residents. So the location of the Armory
15 does not reside within hands point, the armory's
16 impact and presence is so large that it impacts the
entire Bronx.

17

18 If the community vision is ignored
19 in the development process, this would set a
20 dangerous precedent for the future community-led
21 projects, and be a missed opportunity for concrete
22 benefits for the Bronx. While we recognize the
23 project's potential, we remain deeply concerned
24 about its long-term impacts on housing
25 affordability, displacement, and environmental
sustainability.

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The Bronx has long suffered from environmental injustices, and this project must be meet the highest sustainability standards to ensure it benefits our community. The redevelopment must incorporate energy-efficient designs, renewable energy systems, and climate resiliency measures such as stormwater management, urban greening, and air quality improvements.

Mitigating the urban heat (unintelligible) effect and ensuring proper building installation are also critical to protecting residents from the worsening impacts of climate change. The Point CDC has been a member of the Bronx-wide plan for many years, where economic development for the Bronx is at the forefront of conversation.

While economic development is crucial and the Armory has the potential to contribute to it, this must not come at the expense of Bronx residents. Any development must align with community-identified priorities rather than introduce projects that do not reflect their needs or desires. One of the greatest threats facing our community is displacement due to rising rents and

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2 unaffordable development.

3

4 We urge the city to explore
5 mechanisms for deeply affordable housing within or
6 near the project, such as mixed-use development
7 with strong affordability components. Protections
8 for existing residents, and small businesses such
9 as Community Land Trust, and rent stabilization
10 measures must also be prioritized to ensure this
11 project supports Bronx families rather than push
12 them out through gentrification.

12

13 The Armory has the potential to
14 become many things for the community. And we,
15 alongside many other residents, ask that the
16 revitalization of the Armory addresses issues that
17 have negatively impacted the Bronx and create new
18 ones.

18

19 The Kingsbridge Armory
20 redevelopment is a once-in-a-generation opportunity
21 to uplift the Bronx. It must reflect our
22 community's vision for good jobs and to display
23 anti-displacement measures, community ownership and
24 sustainability. We urge the city to ensure these
25 priorities are thoroughly studied and meaningfully
26 incorporated into the project's design.

1

2 Thank you for your time and
3 commitment to our community.

4 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
5 Leslie, for your comments. The next speaker is
6 Julie Colon. Is Julie present and ready to speak?

7 MS. COLON: Yes.

8 CHAIR BRUNNER: Hey, Julie. You
9 may start with your testimony.

10 MS. COLON: Thank you. Hello,
11 everyone. My name is Julie Colon, I'm a part of
12 the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition.
13 Just for a bit of context, I've lived my entire
14 life in the Bronx, as well as my mother, my
15 grandmother, my great-grandmother. We are
16 generationally here. I went to school here. I've
17 started my family here, and I work here. And so,
18 I'm saying that to say I have a really large stake
19 in the Bronx and what happens to it.

20 And so, at Northwest Bronx, we've
21 also been working towards a community-driven
22 development at the Kingsbridge Armory for 30 years.
23 Just to also put something in perspective, I'm 31.
24 And so, we've been literally working on it for
25 someone's lifetime. And so, while we are, you

1

2 know, optimistic and cautious about the potential,
3 you know, for this new project to address our goals
4 and our priorities that were reflected in the EDC
5 vision document, we still actually have a lot of
6 questions.

7 And so, I'm here just to kind of
8 advocate for what I would like to see in the
9 environmental review. And so, some of those things
10 would be, one, an analysis of community ownership
11 models such as the Community Land Trust or CLT, as
12 some folks know it, to ensure that Bronx residents
13 benefit from the Armory redevelopment. It's really
14 important to me particularly that Bronx residents
15 benefit from anything that is coming into our
16 community.

17 The second thing I'd like you all
18 to add is revenue-sharing mechanisms. Those things
19 must be studied to determine how the project can
20 actually reinvest in local initiatives like
21 schools, like parks, affordable housing. I'm a
22 mom, I have two kids. My mom is also still raising
23 my brothers who are like young school-age. I'd
24 like to, like, make sure that like there are things
25 that are happening in our community that are

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2 driving up revenue, but also making sure that like
3 we have access to those things, and that like
4 people who have historically lived here for
5 generations like myself, like my family, like my
6 community can actually benefit from those things.

7 And the third thing is that the
8 project should prioritize long-term
9 community-driven governance structures to ensure
10 accountability and equity. So, it is really
11 crucial for Bronx residents to have a say in what
12 comes into our communities, as I've said, and also
13 to be able to decide how that revenue is being
14 generated, is being used.

15 I say that to say, you know, we've
16 seen like what happens when bad actors come into
17 our neighborhood and propose different things for
18 our community that don't actually benefit the
19 community. I do housing organizing, right, and I
20 deal with a lot of tenants who live in buildings
21 owned by like big landlords, and they use a
22 strategy called predatory equity to basically make
23 money off of bad living conditions.

24 Buildings are falling apart, there
25 are mysterious fires that are occurring in

1

2 buildings with high violation counts, and people
3 are really suffering while still paying rent. And
4 so, we don't deserve to go through that and also
5 not be able to deserve what, you know, to -- like
6 what we want to see happen for ourselves in our
7 community.

8 Community ownership is really
9 essential to ensuring that this development
10 actually uplifts us working people in the Bronx.
11 And so, yeah, I urge you all to ensure that these
12 areas are thoroughly studied and incorporated into
13 the project's design. And I thank you for the
14 opportunity to speak today. Have a great day.

15 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you -- thank
16 you very much, Julie, for your comments. Thanks a
17 lot. The next speaker is Emma Allota. Emma, are
18 you ready to speak? Emma Alotta. I think Emma's
19 --

20 MS. ALOTTA: Good evening,
21 everyone.

22 CHAIR BRUNNER: -- in a meeting.
23 Great. Hi, Emma. You may start your testimony.

24 MS. ALOTTA: Hi. Okay. I am a
25 Bronx resident for over 50 years. I raised two --

1

2 three children in the Bronx. I am a part of the
3 Northwest Clergy Steering Housing Committee. I am
4 also a borough appointee for the Bronx under
5 President Vanessa Gibson to the school board.

6 My concern is many, but I'll
7 actually try to deal with the housing issue. My
8 concern with the housing issue is that when we take
9 our trips to the Bronx, one of the chance that we
10 say is the rent is too high. I understand that
11 there will be 500 units being built, and my
12 question is; who will be able to afford the rent?
13 Because I work with the school board, I can tell
14 you, we've lost a lot of folks in the community
15 because of the rent.

16 If you go up and down from the
17 northern part of the Bronx all the way down to the
18 end of the Bronx, as it enters into the highway,
19 there's nothing but housing, but no one lives in it
20 that can afford it from the Bronx area.

21 And so, many of our tenants are
22 being evicted. And that also affects our school.
23 The school enrollment has dropped because folks are
24 no longer able to live in the community. So my
25 question is, we need to make sure whether we do it

1

2 through the connection -- New York Connection app,
3 or we do it by application that our tenants and the
4 people in our community can afford it.

5 I actually, while I was in the
6 room with the others, looked up the cost of a
7 studio, \$3,000 for a studio, \$4,000 for a
8 one-bedroom. That's no longer affordable housing,
9 and we need to make sure that our residents are
10 included, and everyone is on the same level in
11 terms of who gets in, in terms of equitable amount
12 to pay for this rent. Thank you.

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
14 much -- sorry, Emma for your comments. The next
15 speaker is --

16 MS. ALOTTA: How do I mute myself?
17 I'm on my phone.

18 CHAIR BRUNNER: Oh, I think it's
19 *6. Did it work? Seems like it, huh?

20 Okay. Moving on to the next
21 speaker with Dariella Rodriguez. Is Dariella here?

22 (No response.)

23 CHAIR BRUNNER: Dariella
24 Rodriguez. Doesn't seem to be here. Then the next
25 speaker is Elizabeth Thompson. Is Elizabeth

1

2 Thompson present?

3

(No response.)

4

5 CHAIR BRUNNER: No. Okay. Then
6 Ana Dominguez. Is Ana Dominguez in this meeting?

7

(No response.)

8

CHAIR BRUNNER: Not either.

9

MS. THOMPSON: Hello.

10

11 CHAIR BRUNNER: Oh, I heard
12 somebody. Oh, I see Elizabeth. Okay, great. Can
13 you hear me, Elizabeth?

14

MS. THOMPSON: Yes, I can.

15

CHAIR BRUNNER: Great.

16

17 MS. THOMPSON: Hi, my name is
18 Elizabeth Thompson, known as Ms. Liz. I live in
19 the Bronx all my life, and I've been working with
20 Northwest Bronx for over 30 years, living in my
21 building about -- and doing community service about
22 40 years. I have two children, I lost one, and
23 been an activist ever since then. My son got
24 killed in 1993. I have a grandson who's 30, trying
25 to bring him up correctly.

26

27 And the thing is, fighting for
28 this Armory, I've been trying to do that, do
29 housing. I've been working with Northwest Bronx

1

2 for housing for ages. And the thing is, I work for
3 the city. I work for the city and the city -- I've
4 been doing that, and volunteer. And the thing is,
5 we don't make that much money. And for them, the
6 rent to go up, it's terrible. And I want to make
7 sure that the Armory is affordable to community
8 outreach and community things for our community.

9 The thing is, when things are
10 being done in the Bronx, they don't let the
11 community know until the last moment. And the
12 thing is, why? We have been going to meetings and
13 Northwest Bronx, been doing what they supposed to
14 do. And we are not being informed, and that's not
15 correct.

16 So the thing is, please, make sure
17 that things are correct with the Armory for our
18 children and children's children to be able to
19 function in there. Please, I'm begging you. Thank
20 you.

21 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
22 much, Elizabeth, for your testimony. Calling on
23 Ana Dominguez one more time. Is Anna in this
24 meeting?

25

(No response.)

1

2 CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. Then
3 moving on to Wanda Salaman. Yes.

4 MS. SALAMAN: Yes. Hi, good
5 evening.

6 CHAIR BRUNNER: Hello, Wanda, you
7 may start your testimony.

8 MS. SALAMAN: Yes. My name is
9 Wanda Salaman. I am a long-term resident of the
10 Bronx, and I'm also a board member of the Northwest
11 Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. And I've
12 been an activist here in the Bronx for over 40
13 years.

14 And one of the things that I will
15 say is that we've been to the table, myself, to the
16 table in different locations with the city, and I
17 just want to make sure as a residence up here -- I
18 live on Valentine Avenue, and we don't want to be
19 affected by all the changes that will come with the
20 Armory. And I know that we spoke about Committee
21 Land Trust, and we spoke about committee ownership,
22 and we spoke about owning the Armory, and we spoke
23 about different things, right?

24 But I don't want that to -- and we
25 -- every time that the committee speak about a

1
2 different language, the city, and developer learn a
3 language, and then none of the stuff are included
4 in our conversation.

5 So me, for once, will say that we
6 -- I am tired of people learning and saying that
7 there are for those things, and then at the end
8 they turn around and they don't do none other
9 things that the community needs or want. So don't
10 use our language to -- so it could look nice, and
11 then later on turn around and do something else.
12 So if you all want to work as good faith, and I
13 mean the mayor's office, and the developer, let's
14 work as good faith for our community, and let's
15 make the Armory a good example of something that
16 could be used not only in the Bronx, but around the
17 country and around the world. So let's work out a
18 good faith.

19 And if we are doing a community
20 partnership, let's have a community partnership.
21 And there's nothing else to talk about community
22 partnership or community ownership, and a community
23 benefit agreement. Let's do those things, and
24 they're just not saying it, just because we want to
25 say those things. Let's have those things written

1

2 in paper. Thank you.

3

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
4 Wanda, for your comments. The next speaker is
5 Stefannie Bonilla. Is Stefannie present?

6

Stefannie Bonilla, are you here?

7

(No response.)

8

CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. Moving
9 on to the next speaker, Jordan Moss. Is Jordan
10 Moss in the meeting.

11

MR. MOSS: It's time for me now?

12

CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes, if you are
13 Jordan Moss.

14

MR. MOSS: Hi. Yes. I'm sorry.
15 I'm sorry. I'm Jordan Moss. Thank you. I stutter
16 a bit when I read, so this might take me a little
17 longer than the one page I have here. My name's
18 Jordan Moss, and I am active with a couple of
19 groups. The Jews -- Jews for Racial and Economic
20 Justice, and the Northwest Bronx Community and
21 Clergy Coalition. I live in Kingsbridge and I've
22 lived close to the Armory for 32 years.

23

In 1993, I began covering the
24 Armory for the Norwood News as the state was giving
25 control over it to the city of New York. And as

1

2 editor, I covered this issue about the Armory
3 through 2011. The paper, of course, still reports
4 on it as it still has not been solved.

5 For those 30 years, the Armory
6 remained mostly empty, you know, except for the
7 occasional things that happened in the drill hall.
8 There were a few proposals, all of them failed.
9 Giuliani's support of a sports group's, you know,
10 interest while the EDC never even sought, you know,
11 a proposal like at that time. Then Bloomberg's
12 push for a giant mall with no living wage, you
13 know, agreements.

14 And finally, the seal deal for
15 KNEC, the National Eye Center. The city allowed 10
16 years of inaction before finally ending KNEC's
17 control of and failed plan for the Armory's future.
18 That's why it's so critically important to get it
19 right this time, and adhere to the concerns and
20 needs of local residents and Bronx sites in
21 general. This is so big, you know, 500,000 plus
22 square feet, it's going to, you know, affect the
23 entire Bronx, or else we'll be having this same
24 conversation in another 10 or 20 years.

25 We need to determine what is truly

1
2 feasible and whether it positively impacts the
3 community and the Bronx in general.

4 The coalition has been working
5 towards a community-driven development at the
6 Armory for over 30 years. I know kids from 1993
7 who's like, you know, mom and dad were, you know,
8 involved at that time who now are, you know, have
9 kids themselves.

10 While many of us are cautiously
11 optimistic about the Armory's potential to address
12 the goals and priorities published in the EDC
13 vision document, there are also so many questions
14 about the actual proposal selected, its potential
15 for success, and its impacts on our community and
16 the entire Bronx.

17 It was clear in the visioning
18 process that our community sees the Armory as a
19 model for community ownership and shared
20 prosperity. I know, you know, others have like
21 brought this up before me, but it's so critical
22 that I have to say it again.

23 The environmental review must
24 include an analysis of community ownership models
25 such as a community land trust, to ensure Bronx

1

2 residents benefit from the Armory redevelopment.
3 Revenue-sharing mechanisms must be studied to
4 determine how the project can reinvest in local
5 initiatives like schools, parks, and affordable
6 housing. The project should prioritize long-term
7 community-driven governance structures to ensure
8 accountability and equity.

9 Community ownership is essential
10 to ensuring that this development truly uplifts
11 working people, longtime residents, and kids in the
12 northwest Bronx neighborhoods around here and the
13 Bronx in general.

14 The city can potentially be a
15 leader in this. You know, the city shouldn't say,
16 well, we have to sort of, you know, do what
17 definitely will work. Well, we know from the, you
18 know, the, you know, the prior folks that got
19 picked for at times is what's like, you know, a
20 common thing like malls and things like that. That
21 didn't work and it won't work now.

22 So one more thing. And the last
23 thing I was going to say was the city should really
24 value our input. And I mean the Northwest Bronx as
25 like no one is more experienced and knowledgeable

1

2 and passionate and intelligent and, you know,
3 everything, you know, about this because we've been
4 involved in it directly for so long. And, you
5 know, that's for 30 years. So that's all that I
6 have to say, and thank you.

7 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
8 Jordan, for your comments. The next speaker is EB
9 Messineo. Is EB Messineo present and ready to
10 speak? Calling on EB Mess.

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. I'm
13 jumping back to Dariella Rodriguez, who's in this
14 group of 10. Is Dariella present now?

15 (No response.)

16 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. And then
17 Ana Dominguez. Is Ana Dominguez present now?

18 (No response.)

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. then we
20 have Stefannie Bonilla. Is Stefannie here?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then moving
23 to Ivan Braun. Is Ivan ready to speak?

24 MR. BRAUN: Yes, I'm here.

25 CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi Ivan, you may

1

2 start with your testimony.

3

4 MR. BRAUN: My name is Ivan Braun,
5 and I'm a member of the Northwest Bronx Community
6 and Clergy Coalition. I have lived in Kingsbridge
7 community for nearly 20 years, and have been
8 involved in advocating for responsible
9 redevelopment of the Armory since 2010. So I'm
10 very familiar with the issues involved in this
11 hearing today.

11

12 As a city-owned property, the
13 Armory is a one-time opportunity to create a
14 project that could bring prosperity and opportunity
15 to the people and communities of the Bronx, and not
16 just line the pockets of an outside developer. The
17 focus of this environmental review should be to
18 highlight ways the Armory can advance employment
19 and workforce development, ensure the preservation
20 and development of affordable housing, support
21 existing and new small businesses in the
22 surrounding area, and enhance local economic
23 development. At the core of this project, should
24 be equitable community ownership and revenue
25 sharing.

25

I'm here today to urge that the

1

2 environmental review included an analysis of
3 community ownership models such as community -- a
4 Community Land Trust, worker-owned cooperatives,
5 and to ensure that Bronx residents benefit from the
6 Armory redevelopment.

7 In addition, revenue-sharing
8 mechanisms should be studied to determine how this
9 project can support local initiatives like schools,
10 parks, and affordable housing. The project should
11 include long-term community-driven governance
12 structures to ensure there's accountability and
13 equity.

14 In closing, let me thank you for
15 taking input from myself and others, but for our
16 feedback to be meaningful, it must be thoughtfully
17 addressed in the environmental review. As you
18 know, the Bronx community has spent many hours over
19 the past years working with the EDC to create a
20 vision document for this project. It is imperative
21 that the core components of that vision; good jobs,
22 non-displacement, community ownership and
23 sustainability be incorporated into the
24 implementation of the development. Thank you.

25

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very

1

2 much, Ivan, for your testimony. This closes that
3 group of 10. So we're moving to the next group of
4 10 speakers. They are Osei Dwomoh, Erika Gonzalez,
5 Pedro Dominguez, Kelsie Zhu, Elijah McCall, Alvieno
6 De Matos Oliani Stinson, Deacon Wilson Martinez,
7 and Carlos Lopez.

8

So the first speaker of that group
9 will be Osei Dwomoh. Osei, are you ready to speak?

10

MR. DWOMOH: Can you see me? I
11 just want to make sure that everything's doing
12 good.

13

CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes.

14

MR. DWOMOH: All right. That's
15 great. Let me just pull up my testimonial and we
16 can get this started.

17

CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Take your
18 time.

19

MR. DWOMOH: Yes, no problem. So,
20 all right. Check, one, two, check. All right.
21 Good evening, everyone. My name is Osei Dwomoh.
22 I'm a freshman at Lehman College, and a member of
23 the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition.

24

Having been in the Bronx since
25 birth, I've often seen people on the streets

1
2 holding signs or asking others, including myself
3 for food or money. When I visited Manhattan in
4 December, I asked my sister why the Bronx isn't
5 like Manhattan. She explained that many
6 industries, including finance, have high -- have
7 offices there attracting high-paying jobs, and
8 bringing both back to their communities. Meanwhile
9 in the Bronx, business continued to close in
10 addition to the gentrification, and workers are
11 left feeling undervalued.

12 When I visited the now-closed
13 Walgreens on Fordham Road, an employee told me that
14 he was happy it was finally shutting down, followed
15 by 'screw this store.' Similarly, when I spoke to
16 an employee at the student to close Macy's in the
17 same area, she simply acknowledged its closure.

18 The best way to improve our
19 borough's image is by ensuring people have access
20 to jobs. And not just jobs, but jobs with livable
21 wages and positive work experiences. Organizations
22 like the Northwest Bronx, along with other
23 organizations -- well, organizations like the
24 Northwest Bronx, sorry, have been working for
25 decades to empower communities, fight against

1

2 disinvestment, and contribute to the redevelopment
3 of the Kingsbridge Armory, which we are thankful
4 that agencies like the New York City Economic
5 Development Corporation are working on with
6 citizens.

7

8 But we need to make this possible.
9 So this project must provide high-quality jobs for
10 the Bronx residents, and here are these key ideas
11 to achieve this.

12

13 A project labor agreement that
14 guarantees union labor for both construction and
15 operations. Clear pathways to employment for Bronx
16 residents, particularly youth and underemployed
17 workers through targeted training programs and
18 apprenticeships. Long-term workforce development
19 commitments with local organizations, unions, and
20 schools for wages to -- fair wages to support
21 families, ensuring workers can earn a sustainable
22 living. Expansion of the rent program, a \$200
23 million State investment focused on industry-driven
24 workforce development. And lastly, pathways to an
25 inclusive economy, a \$600 million initiative
providing career-building opportunities for young
New Yorkers.

1
2 In closing, with these fair and
3 effective strategies, we can ensure the Kingsbridge
4 Armory becomes a foundation for Bronx sites to work
5 and thrive ethnically and sustainably. We all want
6 the best for our borough, but conversations alone
7 won't make change happen. We need to develop a
8 support along with agencies and commitment to
9 implement these plans as well as drive local
10 economic growth, helping businesses and employees
11 build a stable future. Thank you for allowing me
12 to share my thoughts.

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
14 Osei, for your testimony. Appreciate it. Thank
15 you. The next speaker is Erika Gonzalez. Is Erika
16 present?

17 MS. GONZALEZ: Hello. Can you
18 hear me?

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: I can hear you,
20 Erika. Yes.

21 MS. GONZALEZ: Hi, everyone. So
22 I'll start right now. My name's Erika Gonzalez.
23 Thank you to all who are here. Thank you for
24 making me part of the community working group.
25 Having the opportunity to work with you all was

1

2 such a privilege. Thank you to the Governor Kathy
3 Hochul and Pierina Sanchez for the investments.

4 Can you hear me?

5

CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes.

6

MS. GONZALEZ: Okay. Sorry, my
7 phone just like -- okay. Thank you for listening
8 to my children and myself and the community when we
9 asked for a space for the youth to come together,
10 as we need them to have a place to gather and not
11 be outside.

12

As you all heard, this is not the
13 first time the public will have an opportunity to
14 speak. Please take this time to gather your ideas
15 and thoughts to share. I live in this community,
16 my children live in this community across from the
17 Kingsbridge Armory, a wonderful historic building.
18 Please, don't forget the tenants and merchants of
19 Kingsbridge. We don't want to lose the small
20 businesses, nor for the rents to go up. Please
21 protect the people who have been living there for
22 over decades. They matter, we matter, Kingsbridge
23 matters, and Kingsbridge is an amazing community
24 full of values.

25

I ask that you preserve our

1

2 heritage and our efforts in staying in this
3 wonderful community. The community needs a project
4 that can help them and not hurt them. Thank you,
5 all.

6

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
7 much, Erika, for your comments. The next person is
8 Pedro Dominguez. Is Pedro present?

9

MR. DOMINGUEZ: Hello.

10

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hello.

11

MR. DOMINGUEZ: Can You hear me?

12

CHAIR BRUNNER: Yes, I hear you.
13 Pedro, you can start with your testimony.

14

MR. DOMINGUEZ: Okay, great.
15 Thanks. Good evening. My name is Pedro Dominguez,
16 and I'm with the Northwest Bronx Community Clergy
17 Coalition.

18

An armory or a fort is pretty good
19 at defending against certain kinds of harms. For
20 example, an armory can defend against bullets or
21 cannon fire. That's good, but there are other
22 kinds of harms that are a bit more elusive than
23 bullets. For example, the onslaught of rising
24 costs of living with this integration of our
25 political institutions. The ever-present and

1

2 exponentially growing gap between the asset-owning
3 few and the asset list many, these are things that
4 an armory cannot readily defend against.

5 I grew up in the shadow of the
6 Kingsbridge Armory, walking past it on my daily
7 trek to middle school and then high school. It's
8 like a great brick Camelot in the heart -- in the
9 heart of the Northwest Bronx community. And as a
10 kid, I would hear occasionally about some
11 redevelopment plans for the Armory. And when we
12 hear development plans, every once in a while, we
13 hear that platitude about needing to prepare
14 ourselves for the economy of the future, as if
15 someone's already predicted or decided now in the
16 present what the future economy has in store.

17 With respect to the Kingsbridge
18 Armory, I would suggest a different way of framing
19 what's at stake and what ought to be built. Rather
20 than preparing ourselves for the economy of the
21 future, what we should be doing is preparing the
22 future for an economy worthy of the dignity of
23 human life.

24 No one listening to my voice, not
25 the economists or asset managers at the EDC, nor

1
2 the home attendants or grocers who live across the
3 street from the armory will be unscathed by the
4 changes we will see to our political institutions
5 and to our economy, with the advent and rapid
6 development of artificial intelligence combined
7 with the increasing privatization of government
8 functions that have traditionally been the work of
9 the public sector. I think that there are two
10 options ahead of us as a borough, and really as a
11 country. Either our democracy will be governed
12 like a modern corporation and thereby cease to be a
13 democracy, or modern corporations are going to have
14 to become more democratic. Those are the two
15 options.

16 The Kingsbridge Armory can play a
17 crucial role in ensuring the latter option is
18 victorious by promising that the Armory is in
19 significant ways owned by the community, and
20 ensuring that the companies that are the tenants of
21 the Armory abide by the worker cooperative model of
22 enterprise that is companies that are owned and
23 governed by the workers. The Armory cannot only
24 shield us from economic privations, it can be a
25 model for the entire city, state, and entire

1

2 country to follow. That ends my testimony. Thank
3 you.

4

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
5 Pedro, for your testimony. The next person is
6 Kelsie Zhu, is Kelsie here and ready to speak.
7 Kelsie?

8

(No response.)

9

CHAIR BRUNNER: Moving on to
10 Elijah McCall. Is Elijah here and ready to provide
11 testimony?

12

MR. MCCALL: Hi.

13

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi Elijah.

14

MR. MCCALL: Hi. Okay. My name
15 is Elijah Mccall, and I have been a part of
16 Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
17 since 2022. I was born and raised in the Bronx,
18 and have been involved in the fight for
19 community-driven redevelopment for the Kingsbridge
20 Armory since I was a senior in high school, not far
21 from the Armory.

22

To me and many others, this
23 project is more than just a project. It should be
24 a space that celebrates Bronx culture and history
25 without the threat of erasing our community. I

1

2 urge the city to include the following in the
3 study: dedicated space for cultural and community
4 programming and analysis of how the armory can
5 serve as a hub for Bronx residents and affordable
6 access to these spaces for local groups and
7 residents.

8 Furthermore, as a college student,
9 I hope this project centers workforce development
10 for young people. The city should study clear
11 pathways for Bronx residents, especially young
12 people and workers to access good-paying jobs
13 through training programs and apprenticeships.
14 This project should reflect the Bronx's diverse
15 identity and serve as a gathering place for
16 generations to come. The Kingsbridge Armory
17 redevelopment represents an amazing opportunity to
18 support the Bronx. The project should invest in
19 our community and our people and not hurt us.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
22 much, Elijah, for your testimony. The next person
23 is Alvieno De Matos Oliani Stinson. Is Alvieno
24 here? Calling on Alvieno.

25 (No response.)

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. And then
the next person we have is Deacon Wilson Martinez.

MR. MARTINEZ: Yes.

(Unintelligible.) Hello, hello.

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi, Wilson.

MR. MARTINEZ: Hi. Can you see or
hear me?

CHAIR BRUNNER: Both. I can see
and hear you.

MR. MARTINEZ: Okay. I am Deacon
Wilson Martinez from Our Lady of Angels. Our
pastor many years ago, Bishop Ahern helped to begin
the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition,
and we collaborate with our pastor, Father Franco
and the pastors from Florida Manor, from our Lady
of Mercy, from our Lady of Refuge, St. Philip Neri,
and St. Nicholas of Tolentino, to mention a few in
our deanery. But definitely we are part of an
interfaith coalition.

We ask that you keep our youth in
mind, jobs please. Jobs, good paying jobs that you
keep our families in mind, our families. Many of
my faithful from our Lady of Angels, thanks to EDC
and the Northwest Bronx Clergy Coalition, were

1

2 heard with their voice in Spanish and they
3 participated.

4

And we beg you that we remain able
5 to continue to participate as owners and inform
6 families, business owners and for the merchants of
7 the possibilities. And I greet you in the year of
8 the Jubilee of Hope.

9

And so as we close out, having
10 heard so many wonderful -- I beg you that the
11 leaders, the professionals, all the members of the
12 "working group," that we truly take it very
13 seriously the consideration so that the commitment
14 to those involved and that those principles and
15 values bring a benefit to the community and to our
16 destiny.

17

And finally, let us give thanks to
18 all of those who have stayed this long and
19 hopefully recorded, I sign off with quote from
20 Santo Holy Bishop Oscar Romero, "Let all finally
21 contribute to the normal working of a society. Let
22 Professional and business people undertake their
23 mission in a spirit of service to the people who
24 look to them to defend their lives and their rights
25 and to further their welfare." This was the close

1

2 of the Bishop's Conference in Puebla, I hope it
3 helps as we close this session.

4

Gracias from Pastor Joseph Franco
5 and from all the pastors and all of the interfaith
6 groups Christian, Catholic, Protestant, and
7 Muslims, that we do work with at the coalition.

8

Thanks.

9

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
10 Wilson, for your testimony. The next person on the
11 list is Carlos Lopez. Is Carlos present?

12

(No response.)

13

CHAIR BRUNNER: Calling on Carlos
14 Lopez.

15

(No response.)

16

CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. He
17 doesn't seem to be here. Then we have a raised
18 hand from somebody who's last three digits of their
19 phone number is 493. Can you please unmute
20 yourself and state your name and affiliation?

21

Just giving this a moment,

22

expecting somebody who's providing testimony by

23

phone. So to unmute, you would need to press *9.

24

We see that you are in this meeting on your phone.

25

Please, unmute yourself by pressing *9.

1

2

(No response.)

3

4

5

CHAIR BRUNNER: Right. We're coming back to you a little bit later. I move on to Ronald Harrison. Is Ronald present?

6

7

MR. HARRISON: Yes. Can you hear me?

8

9

CHAIR BRUNNER: I can hear you Ronald, and see you. Thank you.

10

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MR. HARRISON: Great. Well, thank you. Good evening. My name is Ronald Harrison, and I am the lead health justice organizer with the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. I am a Bronx native, and have been organizing for 17 years. And as a father of two daughters, raising my family in the South Bronx, I have seen firsthand how development in our borough has negatively impacted the health of my community.

We know from data from the Bronx that the Bronx ranks 62 out of 62 counties in the New York state for health outcomes. This statistic is not just a number, it reflects the lives experience of families like mine, who struggle daily with poor air quality, limited healthcare access, and environmental hazards.

1
2 Today, I'm calling on the city and
3 the developers to uphold the goals and priorities
4 published in the EDC vision document, and I
5 strongly urge the Environmental Review to include
6 the following. A full analysis of the health
7 impact, particularly regarding increased truck
8 emissions and air pollutions, particularly with
9 children and seniors who are the most vulnerable
10 populations for respiratory illnesses like asthma.
11 Also, this project must enhance and not strain the
12 infrastructure and -- infrastructure, sorry.
13 Ensuring that the Bronx residents are not further
14 burdened by the environmental harms such as air
15 pollution.

16 As a resident and father, I want
17 to ensure that my children are raised in a healthy
18 environment where they can thrive. The Kingsbridge
19 Armory has the potential to be that space that
20 benefits them for the -- and future generations,
21 but only if it truly prioritizes community
22 wellbeing and health and environmental justice.

23 Again, I strongly urge you to
24 ensure that this health -- that these health
25 concerns are studied thoroughly, and incorporated

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2 in the project's design. We look forward to
3 working together and make sure this is a vision of
4 the community. Thank you so much for the
5 opportunity to speak today.

6 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
7 Ronald, for your testimony, very much appreciate
8 it.

9 So, we are at the end of the
10 current speaker list, and I would like to return to
11 the very beginning of this list to call on people
12 who were registered but didn't respond when their
13 names were called. So starting with Leo Ramirez,
14 is Leo Ramirez in this call, and/or would like to
15 testify still? Leo Ramirez, are you here?

16 (No response.)

17 CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. Then
18 moving on to the next person, Christina Callendar.
19 Is Christina Callendar present now?

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Moving to
22 Paula Segal. Is Paula Segal here?

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then Deury
25 Ramirez. Is Deury Ramirez Present?

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2 (No response.)

3 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then Luis
4 Cabrera is Luis Cabrera here.

5 (No response.)

6 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Next one is
7 Crystal Garcia. Calling on Crystal Garcia.

8 (No response.)

9 CHAIR BRUNNER: And calling on
10 Angel Arias.

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIR BRUNNER: Is Nori
13 Ortega-Bailey present?

14 (No response.)

15 CHAIR BRUNNER: Right. Then
16 Miledys Guzman. Is Miledys Guzman here?

17 (No response.)

18 CHAIR BRUNNER: Right. And moving
19 on to Mercedes Ramirez. Is Mercedes present?

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Nathan
22 DeJesus. Is Nathan present in the meeting?

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Sandra
25 Jenkins. Is Sandra here?

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2 (No response.)

3 CHAIR BRUNNER: Zunilda Vasquez.

4 Calling on Zunilda Vasquez?

5 (No response.)

6 CHAIR BRUNNER: And Learine Suazo.

7 Is Learine Suazo here?

8 (No response.)

9 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then the
10 next person we have on the list who didn't speak
11 yet was Ava Harris. Ava, are you present?

12 (No response.)

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Moving to
14 Jonathan German. Is Jonathan German here?

15 (No response.)

16 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then
17 Grethel Samuel. Calling on Grethel Samuel.

18 (No response.)

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Then Genee Bright.
20 Is Genee Bright Present?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then we
23 have Kendall Jackman. Calling on Kendall.

24 (No response.)

25 CHAIR BRUNNER: And Vicente

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2 Ventimilla is Vicente Ventimilia present?

3 (No response.)

4 CHAIR BRUNNER: Then Paula Shcaap.

5 (No response.)

6 CHAIR BRUNNER: Ivan spoke. Then
7 we have Dariella Rodriguez.

8 (No response.)

9 CHAIR BRUNNER: We have Ana
10 Dominguez. Is Ana Dominguez present?

11 (No response.)

12 CHAIR BRUNNER: And we have
13 Stefannie Bonilla. Is Stefannie Bonilla here?

14 (No Response.)

15 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. And then
16 Kelsie Zhu.17 MS. BONILLA: I am Stefannie
18 Bonilla.19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Oh, great. You
20 are here. Good. Yes, Stefannie. Hello. You may
21 -- you may start with your testimony.22 MS. BONILLA: No problem. Thank
23 you. I am -- my name is Stefannie Bonilla. I am
24 part of DEC 11, but I am here in my own capacity.
25 I would like to show support for -- I would like to

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2 thank you for including schools as Ms. Erika
3 Gonzalez is representing the schools in the
4 community who lives there. I am asking for
5 everyone to not forget the community at large.

6 One of the things being part of
7 the community for over 20 years and the Northwest
8 Bronx community and clergy collation have been
9 working towards a community-driven development at
10 the Kingsbridge Armory for over 30 years. While
11 many of us are cautiously optimistic about its
12 potential to address the goals and priorities
13 published in the EDC vision document, there are
14 priorities -- there are also many questions about
15 the actual proposal selected and its impact in our
16 community.

17 One of the greatest threats facing
18 our community is displacement costing by raising
19 rents and all affordable development. I urge the
20 city to ensure the Armory projects contributes to
21 anti-displacement measures and real affordable
22 housing solutions by conducting a study of the
23 developments potential to impact housing
24 affordability and displacement in surrounding
25 neighborhoods, as well as exploring mechanisms to

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2 include deeply affordable housing options within
3 the project or nearby such as mixed development
4 with strong affordability component. Incorporation
5 protections for existing residents and small
6 businesses through the Community Land Trust and
7 rent stabilization measures.

8

9 This project must support
10 stability for Bronx residents, not drive them out.
11 Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. The
12 Kingsbridge Armory redevelopment represents a once
13 in regeneration opportunity to uplift the Bronx,
14 and it's essential that this project reflects our
15 community's vision for good jobs,
16 anti-displacement, community ownership, and
17 sustainability. I urge -- I urge you to ensure
18 these areas are studied thoroughly and incorporated
19 in the projects design. Thank you again.

19

20 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
21 much, Stefannie. Moving on to call Kelsie Zhu. Is
22 Kelsey present?

22

(No response.)

23

24 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then
25 Alvieno De Matos Oliani Stinson. Is Alvieno here?

25

(No response.)

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CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then I'm returning to somebody who called in and their last three numbers of their phone number are, 493. Can you please unmute yourself using *9 and start your testimony?

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Oh, sorry. My team just says *9 is raise hand. So is it *6? I'm sorry. Try to unmute yourself using *6, and you can also email help@publicworkspartners.com. They can assist you with a problem like unmuting. Yes, I apologize. Whoever is trying to call in, can you try again and unmute yourself using *6 to unmute, please. All right. I'll return to you in a moment. We have right now two more speakers on the list. First is Pilar (phonetic) DeJesus. Pilar, are you present and ready to speak?

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MS. DEJESUS: Yes. Good evening.

19

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi. Good evening.

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MS. DEJESUS: Good evening. I

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want to start off by giving land acknowledgement to the Lenape people who occupied the land who were killed and displaced by European settlers in the past. And I like to start off by bringing that awareness that history because it's always

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2 suppressed, and it kind of starts to feel like
3 history is repeating itself.

4 My name is Pilar DeJesus, I am a
5 partner of the Northwest Bronx Coalition and Clergy
6 Coalition. I'm an activist, I'm an organizer, I'm
7 from East Harlem. I'd like to consider myself an
8 expert of displacement. Meaning that I have
9 experienced many of these re-zonings, many of these
10 affordable units, many of these hearings.

11 And again, part of the reason why
12 I started off by giving acknowledgement to the
13 Lenape people is because a lot of what is happening
14 when I see developers, I like to think of it,
15 unfortunately, like the Europeans that came into
16 the land where the Lenape's occupied, where the
17 concept was about shared land use, right?

18 That was the fundamental of the
19 Lenape society. And that has been the fundamental
20 of a lot of the communities in the Bronx right now.
21 The community is a family, and they share lots of
22 fundamentals, and they have fixed their -- they
23 have settled there. The people who are there, and
24 a lot of times, the developers, they come in, and
25 the city makes all these promises like I think it

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2 was mentioned earlier, and never -- and it sounds
3 all great. And then what happens? Devastation,
4 you know what happens. The developers, the city,
5 whoever it is, I don't really know exactly who to
6 point fingers at. But then, the resources I
7 extracted from our communities and nothing is given
8 back.

9 And so, I think you've heard of
10 what the communities want, but I also want to see
11 like maybe some damages like money being paid back
12 to the community members, because environmental, I
13 see it, again, as a person who's experienced
14 rezoning, the environmental issues that come up
15 with all of the construction, the digging,
16 everything, it is really -- I can tell the
17 difference as a person who's lived in my community
18 for 44 years.

19 And -- anyway, environmental
20 justice is not really real in this city. Although
21 a lot of our legislators and a lot of the
22 developers, they like to say that this is something
23 they're going to follow. But it hasn't been my
24 experience. And so, again, a lot of this, you
25 know, not including community voices, not actually

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2 letting the community actually just own the land
3 themselves instead of handing it over to developers
4 just makes it alarming, because it's just hasn't
5 really worked. "Affordable housing" isn't really
6 affordable. And that's because the language and
7 the way the law uses it is tricky.

8 And so, I think we also need to
9 get better but let's protect and make sure that the
10 community is the one dictating what happens to that
11 land and not the developers. Thank you.

12 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much,
13 Pilar, for your testimony. Moving on to Paval
14 slabieck (Phonetic). Paval, are you ready to
15 speak?

16 MR. SLABIECK: Yes. Can you hear
17 me?

18 CHAIR BRUNNER: Great? Yes, I can
19 hear you. You may start, please.

20 MR. SLABIECK: Okay. Well good
21 evening, everybody. My name is Paval Slabieck, I'm
22 a relatively new resident of Kingsbridge Heights.
23 I live just a short walk from the Armory. And one
24 of the things that struck me about this
25 neighborhood when I moved here from Astoria Queens,

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2 was how much less safe the traffic infrastructure
3 here is for cyclists and pedestrians. It's really
4 quite a bit behind infrastructure in Queens,
5 Brooklyn, and Manhattan.

6 The proposed plan for Kingsbridge
7 Armory calls for a performance venue that can
8 accommodate 13,000 people. That would obviously
9 bring more traffic, but traffic in the area is
10 already quite unsafe. According to data collected
11 by the NYPD, within just a 1200-foot radius, a
12 tiny, tiny radius, just half a mile around the
13 Armory, there have been more than 100 crashes
14 recorded since 2020. And according to the same
15 data, several collision hotspots within this,
16 again, tiny area around the Armory are on
17 Kingsbridge Road, essentially right in front and
18 around the Armory.

19 Such traffic environment is risky
20 for drivers but it's quite dangerous for cyclists
21 and pedestrians. Cyclists in particular have
22 nowhere to shelter from disorderly and often
23 aggressive traffic, as there are virtually no
24 protective bicycle paths in Kingsbridge or
25 Kingsbridge Heights.

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With the prospect of adding a venue for upwards of 10,000 people at the Kingsbridge Armory, traffic patterns must be made safer. So I urge the city to include in the environmental review the following: A, comprehensive traffic impact study of opportunities to improve pedestrian bicycle and motor vehicle traffic; recommendations for traffic calming and de-conflicting measures; infrastructure upgrades for safe bicycle traffic, such as protected bike lanes, bike traffic signals, day lighting of intersections, and; recommendations for ways to connect Kingsbridge Heights to the existing protected bike lane corridors in the Bronx.

And aiming at redeveloping the Kingsbridge Armory and by extension Kingsbridge Heights into a destination for people from across the borough, the city, and the metropolitan area, this project must also consider how to promote their safe journey to and from this remarkable landmark. Thank you.

CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you so much, Paval, for your testimony. So I'm calling on Carlos Lopez one more time who is on our list but

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2 hasn't spoken yet.

3

4 Is Carlos Lopez on this call or in
5 this meeting and would like to speak?

6

(No response.)

7

8 CHAIR BRUNNER: Okay. Then I'm
9 calling again on the person trying to call in from
10 their phone with the last three numbers, 493. If
11 you are still here and still would like to testify,
12 please unmute yourself using *6. And again, if
13 your last three digits of your phone number are
14 493, please unmute yourself using *6.

15

16 All right. So I think for now
17 those were the last speakers. If there are others
18 who wish to speak, please follow the instructions
19 on the screen to use the raise hand function. I'm
20 asking now for the second last time, if there is
21 anyone still would like to testify? Yes, we have
22 somebody raising their hand.

23

24 MS. MESSINEO: Good evening,
25 everyone. I'm sorry --

26

CHAIR BRUNNER: Hi.

27

28 MS. MISSINEO: -- I was unable to
29 come on mute before, but thank you so much for
30 having me this evening. My name is EB Messineo,

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2 and I am a pediatrician in training at the
3 Children's Hospital at Montefiore. It's been such
4 a privilege to hear from everyone over the last few
5 hours, especially all the youth advocates on the
6 call.

7 I've lived in the Norwood area of
8 the Bronx for two years, so I am very new to this
9 work and to this community, and my voice is least
10 of all. But I'm here because it was immediately
11 obvious on moving here and starting to work here,
12 how critically important this project and this
13 space is to my neighbors in and around Kingsbridge,
14 and the people who have lived here for generations,
15 who have always lived here, and who are and should
16 always be the keepers, governors, and owners in
17 this community.

18 I testified today to emphasize
19 that the developers and the city must prioritize
20 all of the priorities in the community vision
21 document, in particular, anti-displacement and
22 deeply affordable housing in all parts of this
23 project. In my work as a pediatrician throughout
24 the Bronx, I see daily the harms done to young
25 people by housing insecurity and displacement.

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2 I know that children who
3 experience housing insecurity, children who are
4 displaced from their homes and communities are more
5 likely to lose the life-sustaining benefits such as
6 Snap, WIC, and Medicaid that allow them to access
7 food and healthcare are more likely to experience
8 school disruption which is detrimental to
9 educational attainment, mental health, and sense of
10 community and safety, and are more likely to
11 experience exacerbations of chronic disease,
12 hospitalization and adverse health outcomes. You
13 can't prioritize things like connecting to mental
14 health care, going to doctor's appointments,
15 attending school, and doing the things you need to
16 do to thrive and flourish today if you don't know
17 if you may be displaced and become homeless
18 tomorrow.

19 There are over 16,000 families
20 with children at risk of displacement in
21 Kingsbridge alone if this project fails to
22 prioritize deeply affordable housing solutions and
23 does not honor the right of the people who have
24 always lived here to continue living in, governing,
25 keeping, and owning Kingsbridge.

1
2 I urge the city to ensure the
3 Armory project contributes to anti-displacement
4 measures and deeply affordable housing solutions by
5 the following: studying the development's potential
6 to impact housing affordability and displacement in
7 surrounding neighborhoods; including deeply
8 affordable housing options within the project or
9 nearby, and; incorporating protections for existing
10 residents and small businesses through community
11 land trusts and rent stabilization measures. The
12 collective voice on this call is so strong and we
13 urge and insist that this project reflect the
14 community's vision for good union jobs,
15 anti-displacement, deeply affordable housing,
16 community ownership, and true sustainability.
17 Thank you for the opportunity to speak and be with
18 everyone today.

19 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
20 much, EB, for your testimony. And we also have
21 another speaker, Eddie Ramos.

22 MR. RAMOS: Good evening,
23 everyone. Hope everyone's doing well. I think one
24 of the things that we mentioned earlier that's
25 going to be important is for SBS to make their

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2 presence known throughout the Kingsbridge Corridor.
3 As was mentioned earlier, the building directly
4 across that houses about six stores is already up
5 for sale. For many years, the owner of that
6 property did not give the renters long-term leases
7 hoping that something would happen at the Armory,
8 and then they would be able to raise the rents
9 dramatically.

10

Many businesses on that corridor
11 have gone out of business either because they don't
12 want to make an investment, they somewhere where
13 they can't keep it or make a long-term lease. And
14 like I said, once again, that's something SBSI
15 guess would have to try to address with the -- with
16 the landlords and the property owners.

17

Also across the street the other
18 way on 196 in Jerome, they've taken out the
19 laundromat and restaurant on that corner and
20 apparently that's also going to be a new
21 development. You know, there's about seven or
22 eight buildings that have been built on Creston
23 Avenue between Kingsbridge and the end of Creston.
24 And some of those locations say affordable housing
25 on the sign when they're building it. This will be

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2 affordable housing, but still require a minimum of
3 a hundred thousand dollars a year in order to
4 apply.

5 They're using the AMI of 130, I
6 think it's \$138,000 a year, which isn't a credible
7 AMI, for the Bronx. You know, even at 40 percent
8 AMI that's still a push considering that a lot of
9 the Bronx is anywhere between 45 to \$49,000, not
10 149.

11 So I think it's going to be very
12 important to look at the buildings that have
13 already been built and are actually going at market
14 rate rather than an affordable rate.

15 Just something that, you know,
16 people need to be conscious of because they -- even
17 the building on Fordham Road put up by stag
18 developers, a hundred and a hundred to \$105,000 to
19 get an apartment, you know, which isn't credibly
20 affordable to the people that live in this
21 neighborhood.

22 So everyone should just keep an
23 eye and ask questions when the developers come and
24 start building these buildings. Because they're
25 being built as of right. So the community has

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2 almost no voice until you start seeing buildings
3 getting torn down. Thank you and everyone have a
4 good night.

5 CHAIR BRUNNER: Thank you very
6 much, Eddie, for your comments. So this, I think,
7 it's the end of our speaker list. I'm just asking
8 whether there is anybody still in this meeting who
9 has registered or signed up to speak and has not
10 been called, or if there is anybody who still is in
11 this meeting and would actually like to speak?

12 (No response.)

13 CHAIR BRUNNER: This is the last
14 call for speakers. So if you would like to share
15 and testify, please, speak up now. I will give it
16 a minute or two in case somebody is changing their
17 mind or decides that they would like to speak still
18 here tonight.

19 (No response.)

20 CHAIR BRUNNER: All right. I
21 think that we have no more registered speakers and
22 we have no more people in a meeting who would like
23 to speak right now. And I think it's time then to
24 close this meeting. The exact time right now is
25 8:41 p.m., and I thank everybody again for joining

1

2 us today for the Kingsbridge Armory Development
3 Public scoping meeting. Please note you may submit
4 any comments you have on the draft scope via the
5 addresses on the screen. This information is also
6 available in the notice of public scoping. Written
7 comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on
8 Friday, February 28th, 2025. Thank you everyone,
9 and have a good night.

10 (Whereupon, the meeting was
11 concluded at 8:41 p.m.)

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STATE OF NEW YORK)
SS.
COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

I, MARC RUSSO, a Shorthand
(Stenotype) Reporter and Notary Public within and
for the State of New York, do hereby certify that
the foregoing pages 1 through 217, taken at the
time and place aforesaid, is a true and correct
transcription of my shorthand notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my name this 18th day of February,
2025.



MARC RUSSO

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