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Robert Dobruskin, Director
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Dear Mr. Dobruskin,

This letter is in regard to the proposed development of the eleven acre former Domino Sugar Refinery site and the impact those proposals will have on the existing neighborhood and its environment.

Firstly, I am in accord with those who favor saving the façade of the main processing plants and outbuildings of similar history, architecture and character. The craftsmanship in the brickwork alone is worth saving.

This segues into the character of the neighborhood. The proposed height and density of the buildings as planned will look like a lovely mirror of Manhattan from the Manhattan side of the East River, predictable lavish steel and glass, the skyline of Brooklyn gone forever.

From our side, the Brooklyn side, behind the proposed buildings, the sky will be blotted out. Planned public access to river front promenades will assuage some of the loss. But what will the new steel and glass dwellers with large incomes do without social services? The 90th Precinct is already overwhelmed. Williamsburg is a large area. The Post Office is overwhelmed. There are no schools after elementary that are to be recommended. The High Schools are dangerous, overcrowded inner city schools. There are virtually no doctors or dentists. The hospitals in our area are low rated. The L subway line is crowded to bursting at rush hour. To sum: what of the infrastructure?

My husband and I settled in Williamsburg in 1984. We came to escape gentrification in Carroll Gardens. We are writers and our arrival displaced no one. We lived for years without amenities. There is still no supermarket or significant source of fresh produce. Our friends send their children out of neighborhood to be educated.

When Kent Avenue was closed for nearly two years to replace sewer lines and lay fiber optic and electric cables my street, Wythe Avenue, became the alternate truck route. Children could not cross the street, people walking pets crossed at their own risk. It became nearly impossible to pull out or park our cars for the non-stop traffic. The noise of trucks careening, spewing

pollutants was nearly unbearable. Where are those trucks going to be routed once the steel and glass high-rises go up? Will the high income residents put up with trucks and dirt and noise? Or will they find the clout to direct the cars and trucks inland to poorer streets? Do the proposed new dwellers-of-means understand Williamsburg has among the highest rates of childhood asthma in the city?

The touted low income units will be on low floors, and they will deal with the trucks and bad air and noise. They will not be able to afford to eat here, or shop here, but they will have a promenade to hobnob on with the well to do. I do not mean to be sarcastic, but rather to point out the impact that is *not* being discussed in the revolutionary changes proposed for our area.

Housing! the Mayor says. Fine, but where is the infrastructure to support all the new families? What is the neighborhood supposed to be?

The complimentary point I wish to make is the proposed height of buildings on the east side of Kent Avenue, upland of the East River, between South 3rd and South 4th Streets, on the old Domino parking lot. Full disclosure, I live upland of that lot. I accept that any view I have will go to someone better-healed. What I cannot accept are structures higher than three to four stories (45' elevation max) built ***within*** the existing neighborhood. The promise made to us when zoning changes were being proposed was that development upland would respect the existing format. That format is one to four family dwellings with some exceptions in low warehouses converted to housing, and one or two larger factories such the Esquire Building on South 2nd Street and Wythe Avenue. These exceptions were old structures already in place, whose renovations respected their original character.

That is the crux of what is missing from the proposed eleven acre plan: respect for the existing structure of the western tip of Williamsburg. Pressure from prominent historical groups has apparently saved the façade of three old Domino buildings. The rest will be thrown out.

Please work with the people already here. Lower the heights of the proposed riverfront structures. The Schafer Landing development is a reasonable approach. Forty stories is not. The density and impact on the infrastructure have been unsoundly thought out, if they've been thought out at all. Assure us that any building on the east side of the riverfront, east of Kent Avenue, *anywhere* along Kent Avenue, be kept to four stories or below to preserve what is a successful neighborhood.

Finally, I suggest the developers be taxed to pay for improvements to the infrastructure. That will not fly, of course, but who will pay? And who is planning for that inevitability?

Thank you for your attention and consideration in this very important matter.

Sincerely yours,

Janyce Stefan-Cole

Cc: Howard Slatkin, Vito Lopez, Marty Markowitz, Sens Clinton and Schumer, Mayor Bloomburg, Governor Spitzer, The New York Times