Attachment 2:
DEIS Written Comments



ASIAN AMERICANS FOR EQUALITY
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New York City Planning Commission
Silvercup West Project (Item #14)
Wednesday, May 24, 2006, 10:00 a.m.

Good morning. My name is Margaret Chin, and I am the Deputy Executive Director of Asian Americans for Equality, a community based non-profit organization advocating for housing rights since 1974. AAFE is also a founding member of the Queens for Affordable Housing, a coalition of over 20 community and faith based organizations advocating for more affordable housing in Queens.

As a community, we are very enthusiastic about the development of the old Silvercups Studio. The studio has been a symbol of New York City's vibrant film industry for the last 20 years. The plans to redevelop the studio into a new state-of- the-art, mixed-use facility for new film and television studios will catapult New York City as the premier city in the U.S. for all television and film production for the next 20 years. In addition, the project will be enhanced by new commercial space, recreational and open space, as well as housing. The richness of this development will complement the already-rich tradition of New York City neighborhoods with their diverse culture and history. The new project will enhance our City's reputation as the most attractive place to work, to live, and where to establish family roots and traditions around.

Having said that, we must address the fact that our neighborhoods are threatened and our residents are experiencing a big push out. With the housing crisis that is plaguing the City, more than 95% of the new 16,000 new housing units that are slated for development in Queens are ***not*** affordable to people ***living in*** Queens. Moderate-

Commentator #1

income working families living in the community can only afford less than 5% (800 units) of these housing units.

The Silvercup West project is a creative and valuable project that will set a standard for future development in Western Queens. By using inclusionary zoning tools and developing ***at least 20% affordable housing units***, the City has the opportunity to set an example and be a champion of the working family. Affordable housing needs to be a component of every new development, whether on private or public land. We commend the City Planning Commission for using inclusionary zoning and calling for 20% affordable housing in the Woodside-Maspeth rezoning. We believe we can do better here. Applying inclusionary zoning will allow hundreds of our community residents to provide a stable home for their families.

Among the residents that AAFE serves in Flushing, Queens, over 85% of the seniors pay more than 50% of their income on rent. For seniors living on fixed incomes, the outrageous housing prices and the severe lack of decent affordable housing have pushed them to double and triple up in dangerously overcrowded conditions and to become the ***"hidden homeless"*** population of this City. We need to change this now. We cannot allow seniors to share studio rooms with other families to make ends meet. We cannot continue this trend of squeezing working families out of their communities.

Today, we are looking to the City Planning Commission to ensure that at **least 20% of the housing units created are affordable housing.** Inclusionary zoning will only build stronger communities. Unless we take action now, we will lose the fabric that strengthened and built New York and Queens as the inviting and wonderful places they are.

Thank you.

Commentator #1

Good morning My name is Lisa Deller. I am Chair of the Land Use Committee of Community Board 2 in Queens. In 1957, my parents moved to Sunnyside Gardens one of the first, planned, affordable communities in the United States which is located in Community Board 2, where I continue to live today. I am currently employed by the National Equity Fund, an affiliate of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation as Director of Asset Management for the New York Equity Fund.

I am here this morning, to present testimony on the Silvercup West project. First, I would like to thank the developers for creating a very impressive project for Long Island City, the borough of Queens and the City of New York. Richard Rogers is a world class architect, the project will provide jobs in the film industry and construction jobs during the building phase, the design is environmentally sound: this is a "green building" and the development will provide access to the public with a waterfront esplanade on the East River.

On April 6th, 2005 the Community Board voted 37 in favor, 1 opposed and 2 abstentions with the Chairman present and not voting to approve this project with conditions related to the provision of affordable housing, limitations on the signage, a request for job training, especially for Veteran's at the Borden Avenue Veteran's Shelter and a opportunity to have the community participate in programming the community facility space. I am going to limit my remarks here today to issue of affordable housing.

Commentator #2

The condition of the Community Board regarding affordable house were as follows:

"The developer will agree to include affordable housing at the project as follows:

- 10% of the 1,000 residential units in the approved residential tower will be set at "affordable rent" for residents [at or below 80% of the median income],
- In the event the office building and/or the community facility are not built and additional residential units are constructed, 20% of the units will be set at "affordable rent" for residents [at or below 80% of the median income]
- In the event the developer deems it is not feasible to include these affordable units in the approved residential tower, the developer will construct no less than 100 affordable housing units at an alternate location, within the Community Board 2 area."

The Silvercup project is the first in a pipeline of luxury high-rise buildings that will come before this Commission over the next few years. Each building will want to trade bulk for additional height to create an elegant glass skyline of towers along the waterfront. Built out, the Queens waterfront residential development is projected to exceed 15,000 units Right now they will all be market rate. Currently, there is no zoning provision on the waterfront to provide affordable housing so, we will all – the Community Board, City Planning Commission and City Council will have to address each building one at a time in order to serve the existing community of CB2 and achieve any semblance of economic diversity on the waterfront.

Commentator #2

Given the population and economic makcup of this community our failure to provide for economic diversity on the waterfront is unconscionable. According to NYC Department of City Planning, December 2004 data, the current average median income for the census tracts that make up CB2 is $38,669; 18.67% of the people are below the poverty level; 15.90% are families below the poverty level. In Queens, according to 2000 census data 29% of the population has income below $25,000, 28% between $25,000 and $50,000; 20% from $50,000 to $75,000 and 23% above $75,000. For a family making $50,000 at 30% of income, their rent would be $1250 per month. I believe, this rent level is not under consideration for Silvercup West or, likely, any of the other apartments that will rise on the waterfront in coming years. Therefore, it is for us in this community to take a stand that building a luxury ghetto on the waterfront is unacceptable. As such, we respectfully request that this Commission strongly consider supporting the Community Board's position that as great as this project is, we need to include one last mandate, which is that no less than 10% or 100 affordable units out of 1000 at the site are designated as affordable.

Finally, to put this in perspective, 100 units in this one Silvercup building will provide more than the entire 61 units that the Queens Boulevard "inclusionary zone" is expected to produce. If we were to use the "inclusionary" standard of the Queens Boulevard and Greenpoint-Williamburg zones and mandate 20% on the waterfront going forward, we would provide 3,000 affordable apartments out of the 15,000 anticipated. This would be a fair and an exceptional accomplishment for this city. I hope that is what the future holds. Thank you.

Commentator #2

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
NEW YORK CITY

TESTIMONY TO NEW YORK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

SILVERCUP STUDIO PUBLIC MEETING

MAY 24, 2006

Thank you Madam Chair and members of the City Planning Commission for convening this hearing on the proposed Silvercup project in Long Island City. My name is Jonathan Furlong, and I am an Advocacy Associate at Habitat for Humanity - New York City. Habitat for Humanity is a faith-based housing organization that is committed to the elimination of substandard housing here in New York City and around the world.

Through the application of the city's new inclusionary zoning program, the Mayor's Office, the City Council and affordable housing advocates have created opportunities for the development of housing units for low- and moderate-income families. While the city has provided ample opportunity for developers to create housing at market rate, there is still significant need for affordable housing to provide for families at lower income levels.

Habitat for Humanity – New York City would like to call on the City Planning Commission to require that no less than 20% of the units in the proposed Silvercup project be affordable.

Commentator #3

Today we are faced with both an historic opportunity and a challenge. New Yorkers are blessed to live in a city that attracts people from around the world who want to call New York and America their home. But we have not kept up with the surging demand for housing that has resulted from this population growth. In the 1990's, New York City's population grew by more than 456,000 to over 8 million, but only 85,000 new housing units were created. While new housing production has recently risen to an average of 13,500 new units per year, it is estimated that the city needs 300,000 to 500,000 units to meet current need. With housing supply constrained, increasing demand has pushed housing costs far out of reach of average New Yorkers. Today one out of every four renter households pays over half their income for rent. Many of our police, firefighters, teachers and service workers cannot afford to live in the city they serve and protect. Low-income families and seniors are especially hard hit by skyrocketing rents and eroding public subsidies.

Impact of the city's housing crisis can be seen in each borough—most notably in Queens, which has a rapidly rising population and a dire need for affordable housing. According to the most recent Housing and Vacancy survey, the vacancy rate in Queens is currently only 2.82 percent. Median contract rents in Queens are higher than all of the other outer boroughs. The median income for residents in Queens is 46,512 a year. While there are 16,000 units of new housing being built —11,000 in the area of Long Island City—very few families currently residing in Queens will be able to afford to live in these newly constructed apartments. Fewer than five percent of these units will be affordable even to moderate-income families and fewer than 1% to low-income families.

One of the more significant development plans in Queens is taking place on the Long Island City waterfront. The proposed Silvercup West project tentatively includes film studios, commercial space, and 1,000 units of housing. The Queens Community Board 2 Land Use Committee met at the end of last month to discuss its position on the Silvercup application. While Terra Cotta developers, owned by Alan & Stuart Suna have

Commentator #3

agreed in principal to include 10 percent affordable housing as part of the project, Habitat for Humanity - NYC, Queens for Affordable Housing, and some of the leadership of Community Board 2 are asking that the percentage be increased to 20.

The Silvercup West development is a creative and valuable project and should set the standard for future development in Western Queens by complying with the new inclusionary zoning provisions and developing at least 20 percent affordable housing on site for low-income residents within Community Board 2.

Comparatively, the zoning that is currently being agreed upon for the Woodside-Maspeth section of Queens Boulevard tentatively calls for 20% affordable housing on-site. We ask that the percentage of affordable units in re-zonings and projects such as this be consistent, and not deviate from that number.

The proposed development plans for Silvercup offer a new vision for the waterfront in Long Island City. While the proposing zoning actions will create the potential for 1,000 units of housing, without a clear mandate for housing affordable to low- and moderate-income residents, Long Island City will no longer be home to many of its current families.

The borough of Queens should not accept only market rate development. Affordable housing needs to be a component of every new development, whether on public or private land.

Thank you.

Commentator #3

earth pledge

May 24, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

Earth Pledge, a non-profit organization promoting solutions to urban problems using innovative technologies, is pleased to support Silvercup Studios' plans for waterfront development.

We were thrilled when Silvercup Studios offered their roof space for the largest green roof in the New York area, and then added an area to be made available to Earth Pledge as the region's first Green Roof Research Station. We are currently using this station to collect data on the thermal and water retention capacity of green roofs. All information collected on the Silvercup project will be shared with other developers and City officials to assist in comprehensive understanding of the quantitative value of green roofing in New York. The Suna's interest in this technology is indicative of their openness to applying the very best green building techniques to their waterfront development. They have indicated that their new project will adhere to LEED standards.

Additionally, Silvercup Studios East River towers will create green space where now there is a gated industrial power plant site.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Suna family as they consider additional technologies that Earth Pledge is working on, and believe their expansion plans will serve as an example for others developing in Long Island City. Clearly, the interest for people to live so close to Manhattan, yet connected to the river, is keen. Providing high quality, environmentally sensitive development projects is in the interest of the community and the City as a whole. Furthermore, it helps to set New York apart as a leader for other cities to follow.

Sincerely,

Leslie Hoffman

Earth Pledge

212-725-6611 x227

Commentator #4 (Devon Bertram)

STATEMENT OF

Russell Hollander
Eastern Executive Director
Directors Guild of America

May 24, 2006

Commentator #5

My name is Russell Hollander and I thank you for allowing me to appear before you today to discuss the importance of the Silvercup West project to New York's Film and Television Communcity. I come here on behalf of the Directors Guild of America (DGA), of which I am the Eastern Executive Director. The DGA represents over 13,000 members nationwide, well over 3000 of whom who reside and work in the five Boroughs.

Founded in 1936 by the then most prominent directors, the Directors Guild today represents directors and members of the directorial team who work in feature film, television, commercials, documentaries, news and sports. The DGA's mission is to protect the creative and economic rights of directors and the directorial team -- working to advance our artistic freedom and ensure fair compensation for our work.

I am here to express the Guild's support for the Silvercup West project.

While we at the Directors Guild of America are keenly aware that film is an art form, we do not overlook its value as commerce. Our industry has an enormous impact on city revenues, not just through production costs, but also through the small businesses and others who gain from our presence -- from hotels, to dry cleaners, to restaurants, to a host of other vendors. In other words, this is an industry that is about jobs and economic development. We are an engine that drives other industries in this city.

As you all know, domestic film and television production began to decline substantially beginning in 1995, due in large part due to incentives offered by foreign countries, particularly Canada. New York City bore the brunt of this decline. When last I appeared before City Council in December 2004, I explained that the number of days of location shooting on feature films, television programs, commercials and music videos had declined by more that 50% from 23,000 shoot days in 2000 to only 11,600 in 2002. Feature films—many of which prominently featured NYC as the storyline -- were being lost to Canada with New York City shooting left to establishing shots and/or exterior location shooting.. In other words NYC "on the fly".

However, I am glad to come before you today with a different message. Thanks to City Council and Mayor Bloomberg, you recognized the severity of this situation and its implications for the economic health of New York. You joined with elected leadership in Albany to take action with a tax incentive, expanded and renewed again this year . I am here in part today to thank you for your commitment to bringing production back to this city.

I can tell you that your action bred success. As you know the tax credit generated approximately $500 million in production spending in 2005 — with shooting days

Commentator #5

hitting an all-time high of 31,570, a 35% increase over 2004 and double that of 2002. I am told the impact on the local economy has been $1.5 billion and thousands of jobs. The DGA has seen a 48% increase in employment days for our members working on film and TV production between the first three quarters of 2004 to 2005. That is a 56% increase on feature films and 44% increased on TV employment days. And these are our members most of whom are residents of this city.

But those of us who work in this industry and are part of the effort to attract productions to New York know we can't rest easy with this production resurgence. As more productions come to shoot in New York, the need for us to grow and improve our infrastructure increases. First and foremost this means insuring that we have state of the art sound stages and enough of them. This is particularly important given the structure of New York's film incentives. To qualify, a production must shoot 75% of its stage work on a qualified sound stage. If we really want to continue to attract production and the high paying jobs associated with the film and television industry we must continue to invest in our infrastructure.

Second only to California, New York is the epicenter of this industry. We want to remain a major player on this global stage. We want production in New York City to grow in coming years and we want that growth to be reflected in jobs and economic health for the city we all love. We hope with that shared goal in mind you will approve the plans for Silvercup West.

Thank you.

Commentator #5

Pratt Center
for Community Development

Testimony to the New York City Planning Commission on Silvercup West

Marnie McGregor
Pratt Center for Community Development
May 24, 2006

Chair Burden and City Planning Commissioners, thank you for this opportunity to testify. We are enthusiastic about the application for Silvercup West. We especially appreciate the mixed-use nature of the project, which will create much-needed jobs and serve as a model for combining job creation and residential development. We also value the community facility and open space that will be included.

Nonetheless, we believe that it is critical that you apply the inclusionary zoning model that the City has developed over the past year in recent rezonings. As with other high-rise development in Greenpoint-Williamsburg, Hudson Yards, South Park Slope, and now likely in Queens in the Woodside-Maspeth rezoning, the zoning should be adjusted so that the maximum residential FAR and height can be reached only if the development includes 20% affordable housing (either on-site or nearby).

Need for Affordable Housing in Queens

The Pratt Center for Community Development has conducting land use research with community groups on Northwest Queens covering parts of Woodside, Maspeth, Elmhurst, Sunnyside and Jackson Heights. We are now also working with community groups throughout Queens as part of the Queens for Affordable Housing Coalition, to ensure that new residential development in the borough creates housing that is truly affordable to a diverse mix of Queens residents.

The need for affordable housing in this section of Queens is clear, and you have heard statistics from my Director Brad Lander, as well as testimony from local residents on the lack of quality affordable housing, overcrowding and unsafe conditions. Community Board 2 has called for increased investment in affordable housing, and we fully support them in their efforts to achieve this goal.

The Borough of Queens in entering a moment of opportunity and risk for affordable housing. Thousands of luxury units are set to be developed in the next several years. Upcoming public actions in Long Island City, Jamaica, and Willets Point will greatly increase the size and scale of housing that private developers can build. As a result the value of land will increase and private developers stand to make enormous profits.

The Regional Plan Association states that Queens is projected to add a half million residents over the next 25 years and will have to accommodate more growth than any other place in the Region. There are an estimated 16,000 new units in development – **11,000 here in Long Island City** – but fewer than 5% are expected to be affordable even to moderate income families, and fewer than 1% to low-income families.

With so much new housing being built in Queens, there must be more opportunities for the majority of Queens residents. We must do more with each new development project if we truly want to create housing that is affordable to a diverse mix of people in this community.

Commentator #6

Applying Inclusionary Zoning to Silvercup West

It is our understanding that the developer has agreed to include 10% or 100 residential units at rent levels at or below 80% of AMI. In the event that the office building and/or community facility are not built on-site, 20% or 200 residential units will be affordable at these rent levels. And in the event that it is not feasible to build these units on-site, the developer will construct no fewer than 100 affordable units at an alternate location, within the Community Board 2 area. This agreement is a good start, and we support and appreciate their efforts to include affordable housing.

Nonetheless, we still believe it is incumbent upon City Planning to apply the inclusionary zoning model of recent rezonings. There should be an as-of-right base which would allow the project to include approximately 700,000 square feet of residential development. Then, there should be a 33% density bonus available – which would allow the project to rise to the proposed 936,381 square feet of residential development – if they project includes at least 20% affordable units affordable to residents earning up to 80% of the area median income (approximately $56,200 for a family of 4). As in other rezonings, the units could be provided on-site or off-site, within a ½ mile radius or Community Board 2. This should apply to any residential development built on site – to both the South Complex where 1,000 residential units are currently proposed, and to any additional residential development that would be built.

It is true that the M1-5/R10 district the developers are proposing would include the standard inclusionary zoning features of R-10. However, as we have seen is recent rezonings, this is not the appropriate model when an entire new community is being created. Under the standard R10 program, with its 4 to 1 ratio of market-rate units to affordable-units, and a bonus up to a residential FAR of 12, the Silvercup West project would include only 40 units of affordable housing, and it would require increasing the residential FAR and heights even further than what is proposed.

Moreover, the planning framework and context of the proposed project is similar to that of Greenpoint-Williamsburg. That landmark rezoning process by the Department of City Planning should set the standard here, and it should be the standard for future development along the Queens waterfront. As in that rezoning and others, the City Planning Commission should apply a 33% density bonus for 20% affordable units.

The developers of Silvercup West have suggested that because their project includes other important features – the studios and other commercial development, a community facility, and open space – they should not have to include the same level of affordable housing. Again, we laud their inclusion of these other important elements. But it must not be, and it need not be, an "either/or" situation. The project would be eligible for a range of financial incentives and subsidies from the City to include 20% affordable housing, including tax-exempt bonds and subsidies from the NYC Housing Development Corporation and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Moreover, this project will benefit from a 421-a tax exemption, which are only being granted to the similar Greenpoint-Williamsburg sites if they include 20% affordable housing on-site. The program is being reviewed by the City, and it is likely that similar future development will only be eligible for tax benefits if affordable housing is included. Most observers, including a report released yesterday by the NYC Comptroller's office, conclude that multi-million dollar tax breaks on luxury sites are not justified unless affordable units are included. Nonetheless, this project will be eligible for such benefits, since changes have not yet been made. As a result, it is even more important that the City Planning Commission apply inclusionary zoning provisions, so that there is a meaningful incentive to include affordable housing.

We urge the City Planning Commission to amend and approve a proposal for the Silvercup West site that applies the inclusionary zoning provisions of recent rezonings, so that reaches its maximum residential FAR only through a 33% density bonus for include 20% affordable housing. By doing this, you will extend recent successes and set a clear model for future development on the Queens waterfront and elsewhere.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Commentator #6

Monty Mitchell
Architect

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May 24, 2006

Commissioner Burden,

I am Monty Mitchell and an architect and resident of Long Island City and a member of the Long Island City Interblock Association. I would like to support the Silvercup West Urban Land Use Review Proposal to extend the Long Island City Mixed Use District to the waterfront as an example of waterfront zoning in industrial neighborhoods.

The project should be commended for extending waterfront access down 43rd Avenue by removing the Department of Transportation salt storage and the extension of the waterfront esplanade under the 59th Street Bridge to Astoria Park. The project should serve as a model for waterfront development creating a 24 hour use of the waterfront mixing residential, studio, commercial, and cultural uses to the under utilized site. The relocation of the NYPE power plant will bring new activity to an under developed waterfront site.

City Planning needs to review the special provisions of the increase of density on the inland neighborhood which result from extending the highest residential density R-10 outside of Manhattan and the highest manufacturing density in Queens M1-5 fully over the entire site. The site and the inland area were down zoned from heavy manufacturing M3-1 to light manufacturing M 1-4 and should be included in the mixed use district to preserve the mix of manufacturing, artists, and to encourage residents to live in the vicinity of their work.

The project proposes to have the density of a R-8 district with the bulk of an R-10 to take advantage of the large floor to floor of the sound studios. The density would set a precedent for future water front development which has previously been approved for R-9 densities only on the waterfront with lower densities along the inland streets. The previous height limits of 365 ft. should be judged relative to the height of the Landmark 59th Street Bridge towers of 354ft.

The proposed increase in bulk needs to preserve the view corridors along Queens Plaza South from the upland sites. The proximity of the tallest buildings height of 588 ft to the Landmark 59th Street Bridge 354 ft. towers will negatively impact the views up Vernon Boulevard and from the Queensbridge Park. The proposed project extends the bulk of the R-10/M1-5 over the entire site locating the largest bulk along the 117 ft Vernon Boulevard street wall.

The use of the Terracotta building for a community use is to be commended however more retail needs to be located along the Vernon Boulevard side to mitigate the impact of the frontage of the parking garage on Vernon Blvd. More concern needs to be taken to reduce congestion from the exiting of trucks across the easement to Astoria Park to prevent congestion. The commercial tower should setback further above 85ft. to reduce the impact of the bulk on the adjoining 59th Street tower and the Queensbridge park.

Commentator #7

Silvercup West ULURP 5/24/06

The project unlike the previous waterfront projects of Queens West is further from public transportation and the special permit for a 1400 car parking garage reflects its location as a destination for a low density automotive oriented area of Queens. Alternate methods of getting to the site such as ferries and bikes should be incorporated into the waterfront access plan. The waterfront esplanade should be widened to include bike paths.

Hunter's Point has a history of innovative manufacturing buildings which have been converted to adaptive reuse including the original Silvercup Bakery. The industrial architecture of the 1939 Worlds Fair is reflected in the external structure of the towers and base. The location of the Silvercup sign on the waterfront is in keeping with the historic use of signs on manufacturing areas and will serve as a destination for ferries from Manhattan. I urge the City Planning Commission to approve a project which will provide an opportunity for the improvement of Long Island City as a mix of cultural, commercial, and residential uses in scale with its past and looking to its future.

Commentator #7

NYC City Planning Hearing on Silvercup West EIS, 24 May 2006

Good morning. My last name is Singer Epstein.

I am a native of New York City. I have lived in Manhattan and Queens. I ~~was educated~~ graduated from New York City Public Schools – PS 6 Manhattan, Hunter High School, and Queens College. My family has owned property in Astoria-Long Island City for almost 50 years. I am by trade a Community Information Specialist and have lived and worked throughout the United States. Two years ago I returned full-time to the family homestead, a middle-income co-op six blocks from the waterfront, and have been exploring my teenage neighborhood.

I have two comments – one specific to Silvercup West and one general comment about development along the Queens East River waterfront.

First, regarding the photo-graphic on page 18-dash-24 of the EIS:

How does obscuring the elegance of the Queensboro Bridge, both a city and National Historic Landmark, enhance our waterfront? How does this development comply with Policy #9, page 27, of the Waterfront Revitalization Program? That being quote -- "protect scenic resources that contribute to the visual quality of the NYC coastal area." -- unquote. And specifically point 9.1.A = quote -- "ensure that new buildings and other structures are compatible with and add interest to existing scenic elements, such as landmarks..." --unquote. ~~Has the developer applied for~~ a waiver from this policy? Is it the policy of City Planning to ignore its own policies? Would the city allow development to obscure the Brooklyn Bridge? Does The City require a developer to apply for

Second, how does Silvercup West fit into the greater waterfront development on the Queens East River?

City Planning seems to allow and encourage spot rezoning and piecemeal development of the LIC-Astoria waterfront, our beach. It seems to promote luxury housing for millionaires with no regard or mandate for middle-income and low-income housing choices where development has not yet occurred.

Perhaps because this waterfront is bracketed by two city housing developments, Queensbridge and Astoria Houses, The City thinks the residents do not care about what is happening here.

If there is only new housing for millionaires, if there is no new middle-income housing (and not the euphemistic "affordable" housing), where will the civil servants, creative people, and research scientists live?

Without adequate housing for "the most" of us, will New York City become a metropolis of millionaires living in luxury highrises and illegal migrants living in illegal housing that is a danger to us all? (such as the dwelling where NYC firefighters died)

Last year, The City, through Partnerships for Parks, helped fund the Astoria-LIC Waterfront Parks Catalyst Project. How can residents adequately volunteer to improve our seven waterfront parks if we do not have timely information on the development taking place around us?

Commentator #8

Recently, Parks and City Planning presented to our community the draft Master Plan for the Queens East River and North Shore Greenway. Because The City does not own enough waterfront property, and some of the property is inaccessible (the power plants), part of the Greenway, including the bike path, is sited on Vernon Boulevard and other city streets.

Yesterday I attended the excellent Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance conference on Economy + Environment = Community.

I respectfully suggest that City Planning, along with Community Boards #1 and #2, the LICBDC, and MWA, host an informational meeting for the residents of Astoria-Long Island City so that we are aware of the status of every plot of property on our waterfront, and so that the City can hear our concerns about housing and open space. While the developers powwow, residents remain uninformed. We need to be educated on the issues that affect the place we call home. We need ~~to be included~~ in the decision-making process. I am available to help you organize such a meeting.

Thank you.

community participation

R Lea Singer
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Commentator #8

REBNY®
REAL ESTATE BOARD OF NEW YORK

May 24, 2006

Steven Spinola
President

Hon. Amanda Burden, Chair
NYC Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Burden:

The Real Estate Board of New York, Inc. is a broadly based trade association of nearly 11,000 owners, developers, brokers and real estate professionals active in New York City. REBNY supports ULURP Numbers C060323ZMQ, N060324ZRQ, C060325ZSQ, C060326ZSQ, C060327ZSQ and C050375 MMQ relating to the proposed Silvercup West development, a beneficial economic development project for Long Island City, the Borough of Queens and the City of New York.

With the planned studios, offices, residences, shops and public open space, Silvercup West will be a benefit to the neighborhood and to the film industry which has been expanding in New York City.

Major projects such as this provide thousands of construction and permanent jobs, generate millions of dollars in tax revenue that fund important city services, and create new housing that is needed to accommodate our projected population of over nine million by 2020. Silvercup West will bring 2300 jobs during construction and 3900 permanent jobs to the community. The project will also directly benefit the residents of the immediate neighborhood through its $26 million investment in 2 acres of publicly accessible open space, including a waterfront esplanade. The developers will also be doing remediation, restoring a landmarked building and designing a job training program.

The Silvercup West plan is consistent with the Bloomberg Administration's overall, five-borough economic development strategy. This more than two million square-foot, mixed-use facility will foster high quality design and will encourage exciting new projects throughout Long Island City and Queens.

Silvercup West will encourage the creation of a 24/7 community, will further the development of the Queens' waterfront and help realize the economic potential of Long Island City.

Commentator #9 (Michael Slattery)

REBNY

REBNY has long supported efforts to develop office space in all the boroughs. Silvercup West will create 650,000 square feet of office space. This added capacity is important for commercial real estate as we see new jobs increase, vacancy levels decrease and a limited supply of new inventory. Encouraging businesses to take space in the boroughs will help New York City retain its unparalleled economic status and will provide an attractive location for ambitious, start-up businesses.

New York City is in a regional battle with our neighbors to attract new jobs and businesses. This project will give us the opportunity to compete regionally and retain and attract this growth. We continue to see businesses – some quietly without fanfare, others with more attention – leave New York. With both types of moves, these companies are taking their tax dollars elsewhere. Creating new office space, especially targeted to the entertainment industry, will help keep businesses in New York and will help the City continue to attract film and television productions, which provide a great deal of revenue.

Development, like Silvercup West, is essential for New York's continued growth. Its approval and development will benefit Long Island City, the borough of Queens and the City of New York. We hope you will join us in supporting this important new project.

Sincerely,

Steven Spinola

Commentator #9
(Michael Slattery)

Kieves
Voyages
Bornstein
Parnes
Harris
Young
Lee
Posner

Joel Shapiro's studio
Sub-Station #4
42-30 10th Street
Long Island City, NY 11101

OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRPERSON
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24 May 2006

Hon. Amanda Burden, Chair
NYC City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, New York 10013

DEPT OF CITY PLANNING
RECEIVED
2006 MAY 31 AM 10:26
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW DIV

re: Silvercup West

Dear Commissioner Burden:

I am a neighbor of the proposed project. I converted Sub-Station #4, a power plant, into sculpture studios. Sub-Station #4 was built in 1909 to generate electricity to run the trolleys that originally crossed the bridge. The building is located on 9th St between 43rd Ave and Queensborough Plaza. The building is identified as an impacted historic resource in the DEIS proposal.

I understand the necessity of development and in principal I am not opposed to the project. However, the colossal scale of project as proposed absolutely impacts the quality of light and historic views of the bridge and the Manhattan skyline. May I quote the *SILVERCUP WEST DEIS* (ES-44) report, *"To ensure the economic viability of the Proposed Action, the residential and commercial towers must provide a maximum amount of uninterrupted views of the East River, The Manhattan skyline and the historic Queensborough Bridge."* Needless to say this occurs at the expense of all adjacent property owners. Essentially Vernon Blvd. will become a 117+ foot canyon wall flanked by two massive peaks to the South and one massive peak adjacent to and obliterating the bridge. More importantly, the density of the project, the enormity of it, will alter ones perception of Manhattan as approached via the bridge. It will homogenize both sides of the River. For the best sense of how the bridge has functioned and still functions read F. Scott Fitzgerald's Great Gatsby, *" The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world."*

My neighborhood was down zoned in 1996 to light manufacturing with a FAR of 2. The Silvercup project as proposed requires unprecedented allowances in zoning. From what I understand the surrounding area will remain light industrial only. Aside from being unfair to adjacent property owners, this sort of spot zoning prohibits balanced commensurate growth.

Sincerely yours,

Joel Shapiro

Commentator #10

Kieves

DEPT OF CITY PLANNING
RECEIVED
2006 MAY 30 PM 4:17
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW DIV.

35-25 9th street
Long Island City
Queens
NY11106

May 26th 2006

Robert Dobruskin
Director, Environmental Assessment and Review Division
New York City Department of City Planning
22 Reade Street, Room 4E,
New York, New York 10007

Dear Mr Dobruskin

As a local resident, I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Silvercup west development.

I am also writing regarding the transit issues associated with this project (which are detailed so thoroughly in the DEIS Transit and pedestrian chapter).

Given that the 21st Queensbridge F-train subway is the closest to the project, would it be possible to create a new entrance to this station on the west side of Vernon Boulevard? (i.e. in Queensbridge park).

The F-train platform extends from 14st to around 12st, so it would be conceivable to run an underground passageway to this location and given the existing electrical substations at this location in the park it wouldn't unduly affect the park's aesthetics.

This would allow safe pedestrian passage from the subway and by providing a subway entrance close to the project would greatly encourage the use of public transport amongst workers and residents.

Thanks for your time.

Tracey Lall

Commentator #34

Burden Kieres
Lee
Young
Pames
Harris
Ryan
Robinson
Byrnes
Rosen

AIA New York Chapter

The Founding Chapter of The American Institute of Architects

14281

DEPT OF CITY PLANNING
RECEIVED
2006 MAY 25 PM 3:20
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW DIV.

24 May 2006

Hon. Amanda Burden, Chair
NYC City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, New York. 10013

re: Silvercup West

Dear Chair Burden:

On behalf of the AIA New York Chapter and the AIA Queens Chapter, it is our pleasure to register support for the Silvercup West mixed-use project on the East River waterfront in Long Island City. In so doing, we join together to address the importance of high quality mixed-use development, the provision of housing and enhancement of access to the water's edge.

Having had the opportunity to review the design proposal by the Richard Rodgers Partnership and NBBJ Architects, we see the importance of the Silvercup West site as a visual gateway to and from the Borough of Queens. The interconnected structure proposed will be as important an aesthetic portal in relation to arrival in Queens by the Queensborough Bridge as the bifurcated Manhattan Municipal Building is to those entering Manhattan via the Brooklyn Bridge. Relatively tall buildings framing a point of entry put a visual marker in place aiding in orientation and wayfinding, but also defining borough identity and character. The AIA's credo of "Design Matters" has been amply manifested in this elegant and functional proposal. The design is contemporary but not themed to a specifically referential aesthetic - apart from a nod to the 59th Street Bridge - allowing these structures to remain contextually relevant.

New York is first and foremost a city whose economic and conceptual underpinning as well as its beauty and charm, relates to its harbor and rivers. With the leadership of the City Planning Commission, issues of the highest and best use of waterfront property in all five boroughs have led to increased residential use and public esplanades. Allowing for mixed-use development that expands the capability of the resurgent film and television industry and capitalizes on the glamour and scale of studio space as an economic catalyst is all to the good. The proposed mixed-use, of production studios, commercial and residential spaces, is to be commended for bringing 24-hour utilization and replacing a street-dead power plant.

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Commentator #35

Thinking beyond the project at hand, we also would urge the City Planning Commission to extend the mixed-use district to the other side of Vernon Boulevard so as to encourage the mix of artists, manufacturing and residential uses currently developing, and in so doing, helping to prevent the possible proliferation of big-box retail. Similarly, the project, as an example of waterfront zoning opening access to the waterfront, could be enhanced by the removal of the Department of Transportation salt pile and linking Astoria Park by extending the parkland under the 59th Street Bridge. Public access should be supported by the greatest amount of public use on the multiple levels. The Silvercup sign orientation is commendable, and reinforces the fact that Silvercup West is a destination that will encourage ferry transportation that links different developments on the waterfront.

Issues of scale are relativistic. The proposed towers will obscure views of the 59th Street Bridge from areas along 43rd Avenue just as the Municipal Building obscures some views of the Brooklyn Bridge. On balance, however, the AIA New York Chapter agrees with our colleagues from AIA Queens that the proposed scale and density are appropriate, and we call for ratification of the discretionary land use actions under consideration today, including the creation of a Special Mixed Use District and the height and setback waivers requested.

The overarching issue is the need for a City that speaks eloquently - and with the highest attention to design quality - to arrival, expansion and waterfront access. We support the project's creation of public open space both at grade and at levels above, and look forward to the project setting a standard for public use at multiple levels. We consequently urge the City Planning Commission to accept the proposal.

Yours truly,

Fredric Bell, FAIA
Exec. Dir., AIA New York Chapter

William Gati, AIA
President, AIA Queens Chapter

Commentator #35