Testimony to
NYC City Planning Commission

Comments on the
Proposed Domino Sugar Rezoning

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Good Evening, my name is John Tynan. I am the Director of Housing for Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens. As one of the largest providers of housing for low-income seniors, families and the formerly homeless in New York City, we see first-hand, every day, the overwhelming need for affordable housing. This need is especially acute in Williamsburg where the rapid gentrification of the neighborhood has caused vast displacement of low and middle income residents. The plan presented by CPC Resources for the renovation of the Domino site will generate close to 650 units of affordable housing and represents an opportunity to address some of this need.

Over 500,000 families in New York City pay more than half their income in rent. Record numbers of families are living in homeless shelters. For each apartment we manage, there are over 20 eligible applicants on the waiting list. In addition to these global statistics, are the very real stories of struggling families and frail elderly tenants in Williamsburg who are being displaced by rising rents. This displacement is reaching crisis proportions.

As a social service provider, Catholic Charities has been a part of the Williamsburg community for over 100 years. Our community-based services include Head Start, Child Care, Residential Services for the Developmentally Disabled, Senior Luncheon Programs, Family Housing, Supportive Housing for the formerly Homeless and for Persons with HIV/AIDS, Case Management and Counseling for Families. Through these programs, and in working together with the local Catholic Parishes, we see families, seniors and individuals who struggle everyday to make ends meet. Those

struggles have been dramatically amplified by the pressure placed on these families by landlords looking to raise rents.

The plan presented by CPC Resources for the redevelopment of Domino has demonstrated a true sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs of the low and middle income residents of Williamsburg. What is especially striking about the plan is the commitment to serve the lowest income residents and to develop housing for senior citizens. The plan's pledge to give preference to residents of the local community will also help to ensure that this neighborhood continues to offer opportunities for people of all incomes.

We commend CPC Resources for their pledge to serve the most needy residents of Williamsburg. With 30% of the units as affordable, the plan voluntarily exceeds the 20% on-site affordability that is now required of other waterfront developers. The plan by CPC Resources to develop affordable units, in the first phase, will also help to address the tremendous and immediate need for affordable housing.

We urge the Department of City Planning to support the CPC Resources plan to redevelop the Domino site, for its commitment to providing affordable housing in Williamsburg.