



Hon. Vanessa L. Gibson
Borough President

BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD No. 10

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Joseph Russo
Chairperson

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March 29, 2024

Daniel Garodnick, Chairperson

City Planning Commission

120 Broadway, 31st Floor

New York, New York 10271

RE: Metro North Rezoning

Dear Commissioner Garodnick,

We share with you our decision to oppose the Metro North Rezoning with conditions which we will detail. However, we also share with the City Planning Commission (CPC) improvements to the plan that we hope the City Planning Commission and Department of City Planning (DCP) will take into consideration.

Firstly, we are pleased with the addition of the Metro North stations to The Bronx. Certainly, we need more reliable modes of transportation to get our residents as far north as Connecticut and toward midtown Manhattan in roughly an hour. However, our Community Board reviewed the plans in the designated timeframe. We concluded that we would like to see opportunities for affordable homeownership. Affordable condominiums and cooperative apartments should be a part of this plan. There are more than 7,000 proposed units. There is ample opportunity for a city-led process for affordable homeownership. Furthermore, our portion of the rezoning should still adhere to our contextual zoning requirements. We want to see incorporated side yard requirements, parking requirements and our Lower Density Growth Management Area (LDGMA) protections so that potential medium density buildings are afforded the same, positive features that buildings must have presently in R6A and R7-1 districts in Community District 10. Building height remains a concern for our district. Among corridors such as East Tremont Avenue, limiting height to 5-7 stories, which is in line with current apartment buildings along the 2500 block, would ensure uniformity. If we are to welcome new construction, the Community District 10 portion of the rezoning should consider and adhere to what is already in place regarding building height.

We respectfully ask that the CPC and DPC work with the City of New York Housing Preservation and Development to deepen affordability. Often, newly built income-restricted units still require rent that many New Yorkers still cannot afford even with full time employment.

Developers must make commitments to have deeply and permanently affordable housing and this is a feature that we did not hear about enough of or at all in the presentations made to our Community Board.

Moreover, often the CPC and DCP lead discussions about the future of the City of New York through rezonings. Community Boards often do not have enough time to plan, acquire data and review environmental studies and reports. With the potential for 7,000 units of housing, we did not hear of commitments for new school seats in School District 11. We did not hear to which public schools zones our new neighbors will be assigned. These are crucial components that factor into planning and that are often lightly discussed if not at all as part of a rezoning process. We also have not seen the Department of Environmental Protection commit to a capital plan for new water mains and sewer lines that can help the perennially flooded streets throughout this area. Lastly but certainly not least, neither the Fire Department, Police Department or Department of Sanitation will see its ranks grow as part of this plan. Again, these are features of proper city planning that our Community Board membership would like to review more closely if included in your presentations.

While not exclusively a part of the Metro North Rezoning, we are displeased that none of the stations will have a parking lot to accommodate commuters. Nearly every Metro North station has a parking lot. It is our opinion that the trains will be operational before even half of the promised apartments units are built. The City Planning Commission and Department of City Planning should be advocating on our behalf before Metro North. Furthermore, we have not been approached or have been shown planned MTA Bus service increases. The Bx40, BX42, BX08 and BX21 to name a few bus lines, will require more frequent bus service. To date, we have not seen any commitment to that effect.

In closing, we are hopeful our conditions and recommendations will be considered. As our official ULURP process is now concluded, community outreach and formal discussion need not cease. The Commission and the Department's staff are welcome to provide us with feedback and discuss with us new features of the plan at your convenience. Most importantly, we want to see The Bronx succeed.

Sincerely,

Joseph Russo, Chairperson