

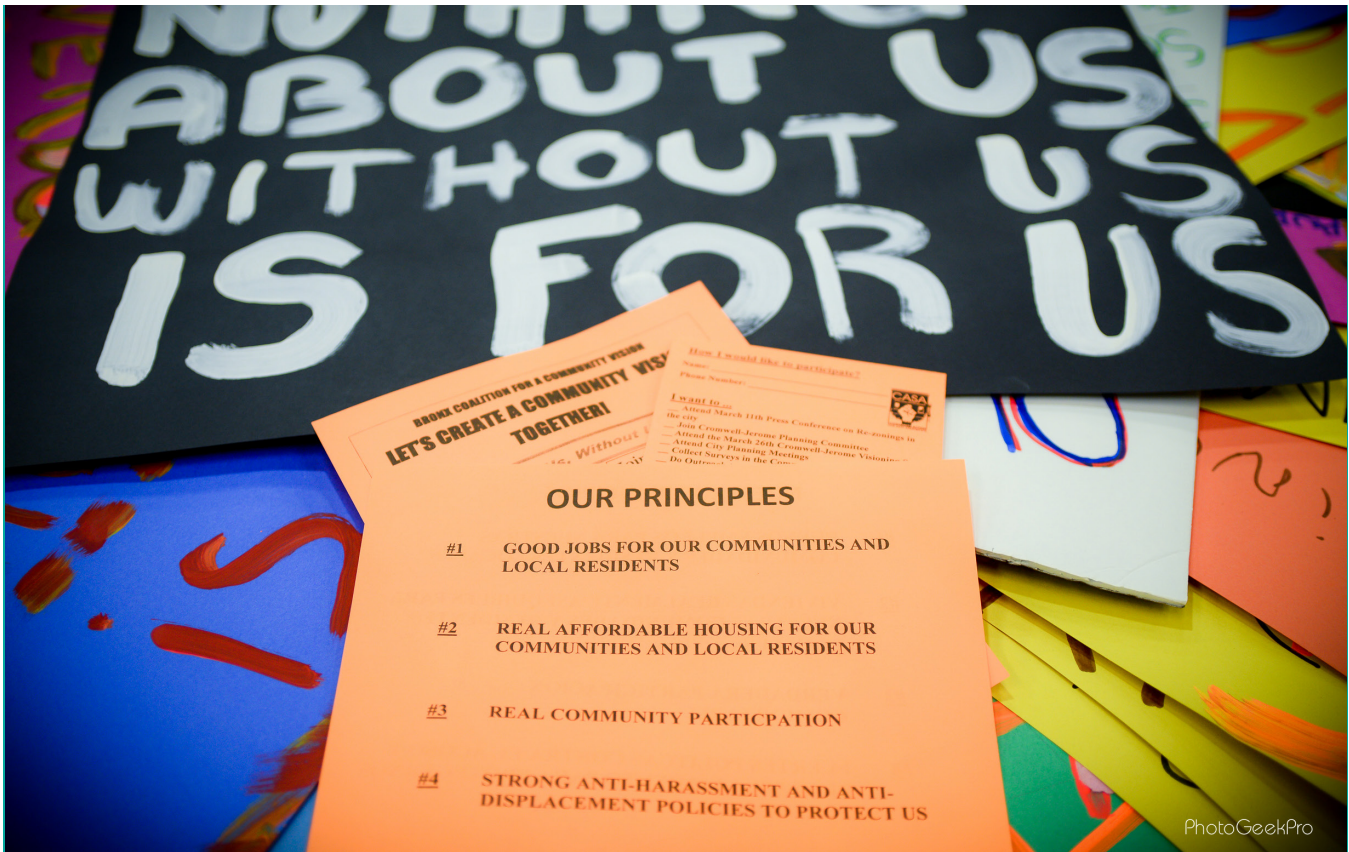
**NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US, IS FOR US!**

# **BRONX COALITION FOR A COMMUNITY VISION**



# **POLICY PLATFORM**

**OCTOBER 2015**



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# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

In May of 2014, the Mayor’s Housing Plan was released, laying out the goal to build and preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing over 10 years. Central to the success of the plan is the rezoning of 15 neighborhoods in order to facilitate the construction of new residential housing. In September of 2014, we learned that 73 blocks along Jerome Avenue in the Bronx, from 167th to 183rd streets, were being studied by the City to see how the current regulations of the mostly industrial and commercially zoned land could be changed to allow for the building of residential housing.

Most of the land in the Jerome Avenue study lies in the poorest urban congressional district in the country, where the average income for a family of four is \$25,000<sup>1</sup>, almost all of the housing is rent stabilized and close to half of residents pay more than 50% of their income towards rent, making them severely rent burdened.<sup>2</sup> A substantial portion of the more than 3,000 workers that run the businesses along Jerome Avenue are immigrants, many are not officially counted.<sup>3</sup>

Over the last few decades, the history of the neighborhood for many South Bronx residents is one of disinvestment and displacement. Many have lived through years of fire, where the South Bronx lost 80% of its housing stock, entire neighborhoods were redlined and fire departments were defunded and closed. Many others have moved to the Bronx in the last few years because they could no longer afford the neighborhoods where they grew up, like the Lower East Side and East Harlem.

These South Bronx residents are informed by history and determined to ensure that the rezoning of Jerome Avenue does not repeat the mistakes of the past. The Mayoral administration has promised a new way forward, where development will be led by community needs instead of developers’ profits.<sup>4</sup> Community groups and residents from across the South Bronx have come together to make that promise a reality.



<sup>1</sup>“State of the City’s Housing and Neighborhoods,” NYU Furman Center, 2013

<sup>2</sup>“State of the City’s Housing and Neighborhoods,” NYU Furman Center, 2013

<sup>3</sup>Jerome Avenue Study Neighborhood Profile – Employment Profile,” Department of City Planning

<sup>4</sup> “Text of Mayor de Blasio’s State of the City Address,” The New York Times, February 3, 2015.

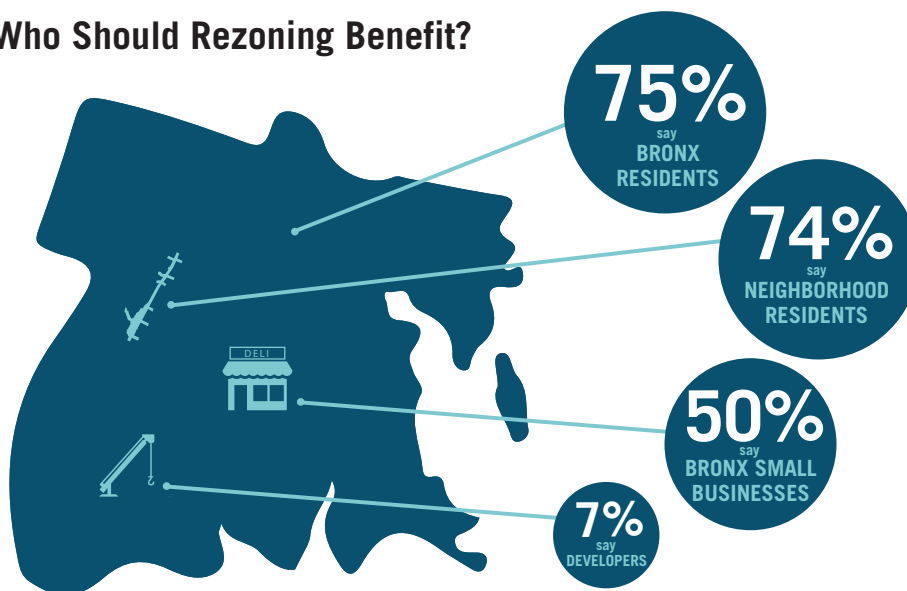
## OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

From October 2014 to February 2015, the Department of City Planning convened a series of invite-only stakeholder meetings to discuss plans for the rezoning. Concerned about the lack of community involvement in the planning process, a group of community members began to meet and lay plans for genuine community engagement. Grounded in the belief that community members are the experts, we decided that our first act must be to hold a forum educating community members about the City’s plans, about the study area and about the need to get involved. On March 5th, in the middle of a snow storm, more than 450 community residents came to learn about the Jerome Avenue study area, the process of rezoning and how they could get involved. At the forum, we asked community members to sign up to take leadership roles and to help plan and facilitate a series of visioning sessions that would lead to the creation of a policy platform. The steering committee, made up of faith leaders, tenants, neighborhood union members, auto workers and members of tenant organizing groups adopted a series of principles to guide the visioning process.

### PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE REZONING PROCESS

1. **STRONG ANTI-HARASSMENT & ANTI-DISPLACEMENT POLICIES FOR RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL TENANTS**
2. **REAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
3. **GOOD JOBS & LOCAL HIRE**
4. **REAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

### Who Should Rezoning Benefit?



From community survey

We have not set out to develop a proposal for how the 73 blocks along Jerome Ave should best be used. Rather, our task was to develop a set of policy recommendations that would translate these principles into action.

If we cannot solve the dilemma of how to achieve change and progress without displacement, exploitation and harassment in the South Bronx, we risk losing one of the last neighborhoods where poor new Yorkers can afford to live. We risk losing the diversity and vibrancy of our City.

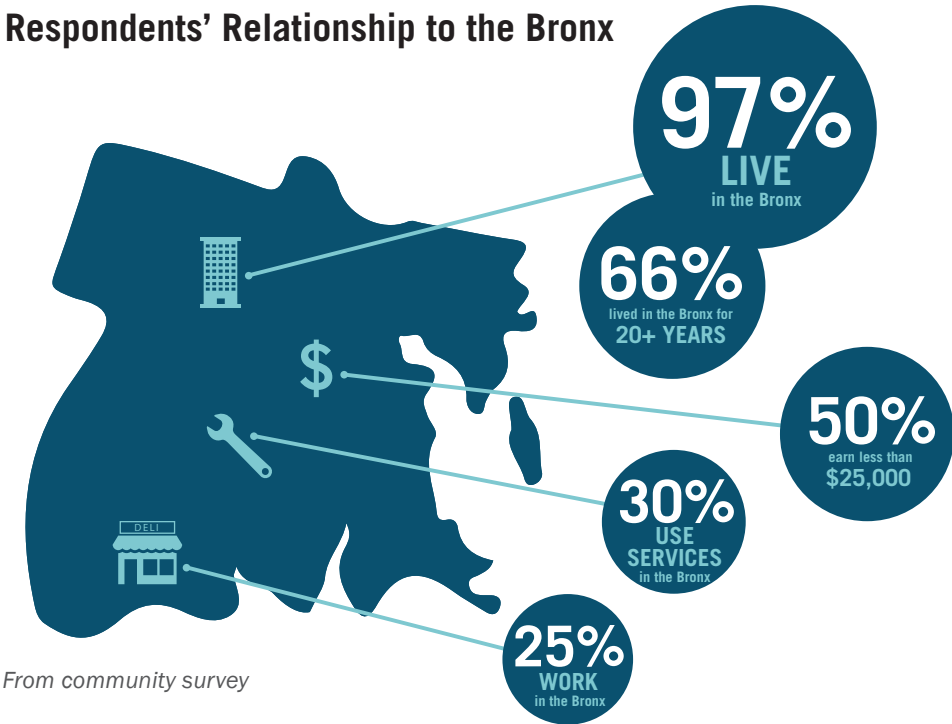
This report outlines a series of recommendations, ranging from administrative, to budgetary and legislative changes that we believe will turn our four principles into action and facilitate a process for change that will truly benefit the Bronx and all of New York City.

## HOW OUR COMMUNITY DEVELOPED THIS PLATFORM

After the community forum convened on March 5th, the steering committee met and created a structure for community engagement. From March to June, we held four visioning sessions. At each session, we gave an overview of the community engagement process, of our coalition, and presented and shared data and information on the current status of jobs and employment, affordable housing, community involvement, commercial industries and tenant harassment. Grounded in this data and in our shared experiences, we worked in groups at each visioning session to brainstorm a list of solutions. Each session was attended by **100-150** community residents.

We also collected over **500** surveys about people’s concerns and hopes for the rezoning. This data is used throughout the platform to document the needs identified by community members. And we conducted extensive community outreach to ensure as many residents and workers as possible knew about this process.

### Respondents’ Relationship to the Bronx



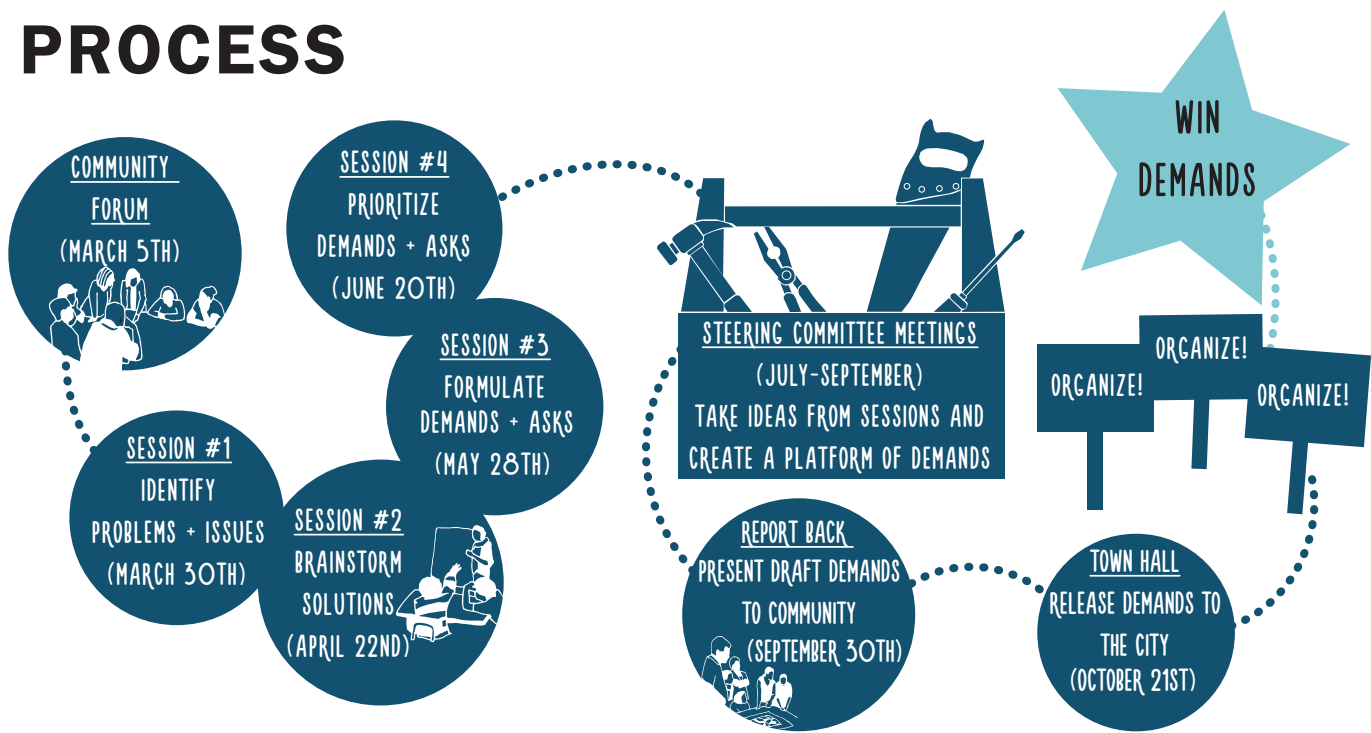
From community survey

On September 30th, we held a forum where we presented a draft of these policy recommendations to over **150** community residents to gain their insight, feedback and priorities.

**In total, more than 1,500 community members attended the forums and visioning sessions.**

More than **6,500** doors were knocked to tell tenants about the rezoning process and to let them know about the visioning session. More than **322** business owners had conversations with members of the coalition about the rezoning, while all businesses got information and flyers and more than **2,000** community residents were called.

# PROCESS



# POLICY PLATFORM

Through the visioning and community engagement process, community residents identified problems and issues, brainstormed the possible solutions and created the following series of recommendations for each of the 4 principles: Strong anti-harassment and anti-displacement policies for residential and commercial tenants; real affordable housing; good jobs and local hire and real community participation.

## POLICY MECHANISMS

There are different policy mechanisms that the City could use to implement our recommendations. In the following platform, each recommendation will have an icon to indicate the specific mechanism that the City could use to achieve that recommendation. The legend explains the mechanisms that will be referred to as icons throughout the platform.



**Citywide Legislation** refers to laws passed in New York City. Any NYC Council member can introduce a bill, which proposes a new law or a change to an existing one. A bill is then brought to a vote and will become a local law if a majority of Council members support it and the Mayor signs off.



**Requirements Attached to City Funding:** When a City agency provides funding for a project, the agency can require the recipients of the funds to follow certain rules, or conditions. For example, certain City-funded development projects have to hire locally or pay a living wage.



**Zoning Text** sets requirements for every piece of land in the city. Land is divided into different types, or “zones.” Each type of area (each “zone”) has a specific set of rules that say how the land can be used – for example, for commercial, manufacturing, or residential building – and how much can be built.



**Community Benefits Agreements (CBA):** CBAs are legally enforceable private contracts between a developer and local community organizations. In exchange for community support of the project, the developer agrees to provide certain benefits such as local hiring, dedicated community space in a new facility, or anything else the community wants and is able to negotiate for.



**City Budget:** The budget guides how the City spends money on many kinds of services, programs, operations, activities, and physical infrastructure, ranging from education to policing to the building of parks or bridges. Putting a “line item” in the City budget means that the City agrees to set aside money for that expense.



**PILOT (“Payment in Lieu of Taxes”) Fund:** Within a certain area, the City can give developers exemptions from property taxes if the developer agrees to make PILOT payments instead (which are lower than taxes). PILOT payments can be put into a specific fund so that the money generated by development within a neighborhood is set aside for local use, rather than having tax dollars go to the City’s general fund.



**Requirements in Requests for Proposal (RFPs) for City-Funded Projects:** RFPs are the public invitations City agencies put out when they are selling or leasing City controlled land to a developer. An RFP can include specific requirements developers should meet. The City selects a winning proposal and the requirements that were in the RFP become part of the contract between the City and the winning bidder.



**Changes to the Rules and Regulations of City Agencies:** The City has many administrative agencies that are responsible for providing services and carrying out specific responsibilities. An “administrative” or “regulatory” change is where a City agency changes its own rules (or “regulations”) in some way, which impacts the practices of the agency and the population that it serves.



# REAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY?

While the City plans to build more affordable housing in our neighborhood through the rezoning process, we need to be sure that this new housing will actually meet the needs of current residents. Because of soaring rent increases across the City and lack of protection against these rising costs, many people who live and work in our neighborhood can no longer afford to live here. Community members fear that this will be an even bigger problem because of the rezoning.

49% also cite homelessness as a pressing neighborhood issue and 50% report that limited housing for seniors is a major issue. In addition, many community members are unable to access permanently affordable housing due to barriers such as credit history and criminal background checks. To address this, the city should adopt the following policy proposals to ensure that new affordable housing is truly affordable and meets the needs of the existing community.

**87% of survey respondents said that at least 50% of new housing built should be set aside for families earning under \$27,000/year.**

### Housing Affordability

**86%**

say **HIGH RENT** is one of the most important issues in the Bronx



**88%**

had a **RENT INCREASE** in the past 3 years



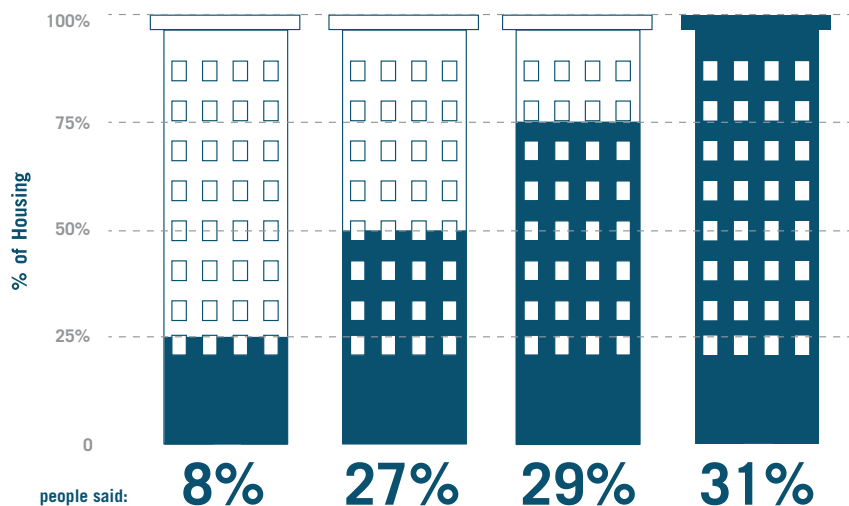
**90%**

worry rezoning will **INCREASE RENT** even more



From community survey

### How Much Housing Should Be Set Aside for Households Earning Under \$27,000/Year?



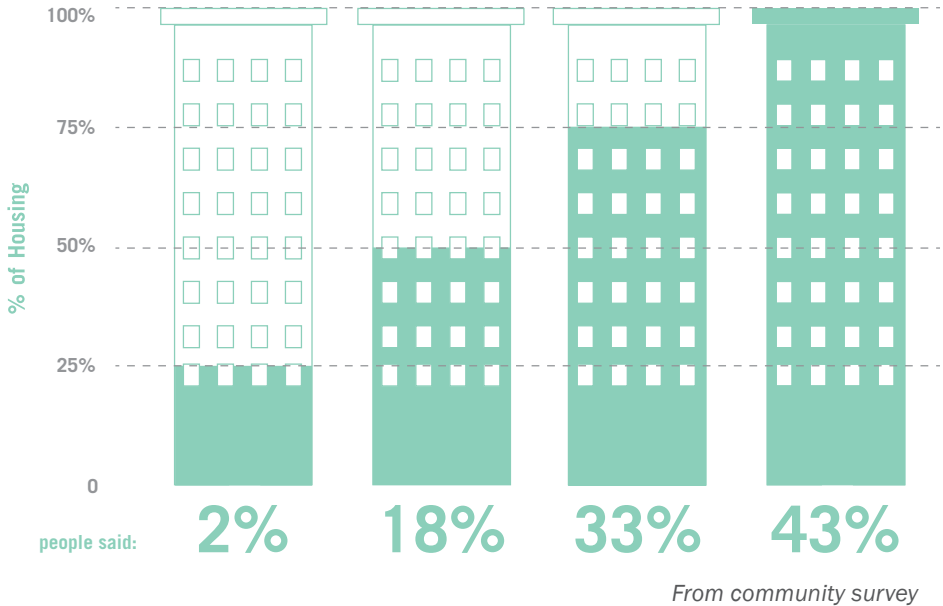
From community survey



**94% of survey respondents said that at least 50% of all new housing should be set aside for local residents.**



**How Much Housing Should Be Set Aside for Local Residents?**



**POLICY PLATFORM**

**The City should ensure that new housing reflects the needs of current neighborhood residents.**



To do this the City should:

- Ensure that 100% of new construction reflects the needs of current neighborhood residents.
- Create a special purpose district so that the zoning is tailored to the specific needs of our communities and require any developer who wants to add residential buildings on Jerome Avenue to build apartments that meet the needs of current residents.
- Provide subsidies and a programmatic commitment to build housing at affordability levels and apartment sizes that reflect the need of the existing residents of the neighborhood. New housing should also prioritize people with disabilities, single parents, veterans, youth, and people who are currently homeless.
- Convert “cluster-site” shelter units back to permanent housing to help significantly reduce the number of homeless families and provide City and State rent subsidies to allow families in “cluster-site” units that meet Section 8 quality standards to secure leases for the same apartments in which they already live.

**The City should reduce barriers to tenant eligibility for affordable housing.**



To do this the City should:

- Pass legislation limiting the criteria that HPD uses to determine which tenants qualify to be able to move into affordable housing. For example, people should not be turned away from affordable housing because of credit checks.

**The City should create new requirements for developers seeking public subsidies.**



To do this the City should:

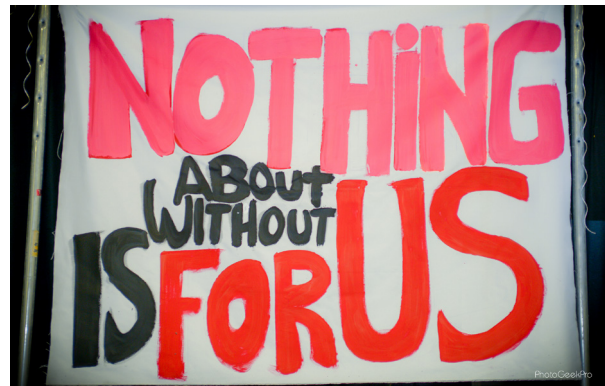
- Establish criteria for which landlords/developers are allowed to use public subsidies (HPD-administered subsidies), based on their:
  - Track record of maintaining buildings;
  - Track record of building affordable housing;
  - Track record of local community engagement;
  - Track record of working with contractors with a proven record of safety for 5 years, who don't have a record of wage theft or job misclassification, including all subcontractors, going back 5 years.

**The City should ensure that community benefits are linked to new construction.**



To do this the City should:

- Require developers to provide community benefits, like green roofs and beautifying the community.
- Require developers who want to build additional housing to set aside space for schools, community space, senior centers, open space, and other necessary community facilities to ensure that the neighborhood has enough of what it needs when new residents come in.
- Provide subsidies and programmatic commitment to support the development of new community facilities and neighborhood amenities and have developers sign enforceable agreements to provide additional amenities such as open spaces and schools.



Community visioning session



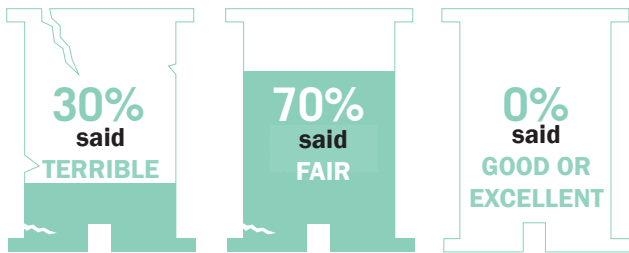
# ANTI-DISPLACEMENT & ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICIES FOR RESIDENTIAL TENANTS

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY?

As the City plans to create new affordable housing through the rezoning of Jerome Avenue, they must ensure that current residents are not being harassed by their landlords or displaced from their homes. This is particularly important because our community has one of the highest rates of rent stabilized apartments in the city, and displacement leads to increased rents and loss of affordable housing.

In addition, tenant harassment is directly related to the availability of affordable housing. For rent stabilized tenants, every time they move out of their apartment, landlords are legally allowed to increase rents by at least 20%. This means not only do tenants lose a rent stabilized apartment but that over time the apartment itself is made less affordable and eventually deregulated.

### How People Rated Their Housing Conditions

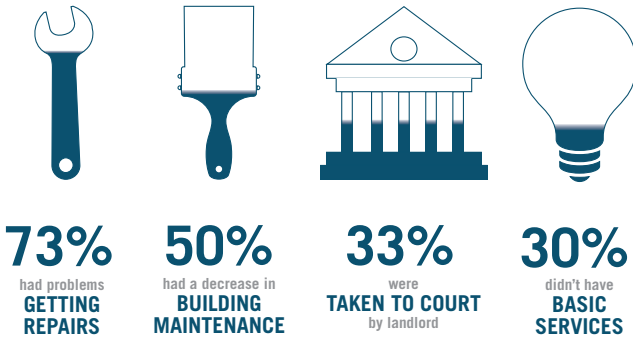


From community survey

Harassment can take many forms: lack of services (heat, hot water, etc.); threats from landlords, frivolous legal action, non-rent fees, pressuring tenants to take buyouts, taking advantage of loopholes in the rent stabilization laws, and pitting tenants against one another. Even before the rezoning, Bronx tenants are already experiencing many of these conditions. 68% of tenants surveyed reported that their current housing conditions are terrible or fair; 57% report that they have problems getting repairs done, 27% have

been taken to court by their landlord; 27% have lived without basic services and 33% have seen a decrease in maintenance services in their building. People surveyed fear that this harassment will become worse with the rezoning: 80% report being concerned that rent will no longer be affordable after the rezoning and 59% report concerns about being displaced from the neighborhood. Because tenants often are not aware of their rights, they are particularly vulnerable to harassment.

### Housing Problems in Past 3 Years



From community survey

While we are encouraged by the City's recent funding for eviction prevention services, we know that most of the work to keep tenants in their homes comes before court papers are served.

Accordingly, the City and State must adopt the following policy proposals to create a comprehensive, neighborhood-specific approach to prevent harassment and displacement of current residents.

## POLICY PLATFORM

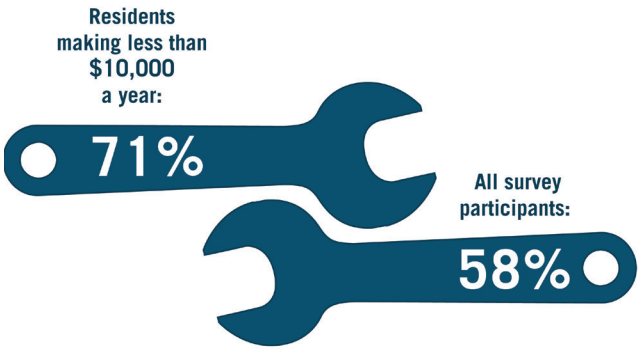
**The City should enact a set of policies that create incentives that prevent speculation and displacement and promote affordable housing development.**



*To do this the City should:*

- Require “landlord licenses,” creating strict rules for which landlords or developers are allowed to operate in NYC.
  - HPD or another city agency would determine whether a landlord can get a license based on a set of qualifications (e.g.: number of violations in other buildings they own, unpaid taxes and fees owed to the city, other buildings in foreclosure). The license would enable landlords to acquire property. If a landlord is not in compliance, the landlord would not be eligible to receive another license and therefore unable to purchase more buildings.
- Publicly grade landlords and publicly display that grade in their building lobby.
- Pass and fund Intro 214, providing a right to a lawyer for tenants facing the loss of their homes.
- Amend the Alternative Enforcement Program (AEP) to allow tenants to get a rent reduction and use a City-run escrow account when their building is in bad repair.
  - This is modeled on a program in LA, called the Rent Escrow Account Program. When there are violations that haven’t been fixed, the city would be able to reduce tenants’ rent and allow them to pay their rent into an escrow account, monitored by the city. The Landlord would not get the money until the City verifies that repairs have been done.
- Create citywide “Certificate of No Harassment” requirements, preventing landlords who have harassed tenants from getting certain permits from the Department of Buildings
  - In order to raise rents for new tenants, landlords often do renovations on apartments and buildings. This law would prevent landlords who have a history of harassment from getting the permits they need to do those renovations. This model has been locally effective in the Clinton special district, and should be expanded by requiring that DOB and HPD put a similar policy in place across the city. In addition, the policy should apply to a larger set of DOB permits.
- Pass legislation to allow for the City to take ownership of buildings as a result of landlord harassment, failure to pay code violations and the criminal use of property. The City should also use its authority to take ownership of individual abandoned buildings, even where there are no tax arrears.
- Create a disincentive for landlords to buy buildings with the intent of selling them quickly (speculative flipping) by applying a graduated flip fee, structured like the mortgage recording fee. The City should also help facilitate stable long-term New York City homeownership by increasing the New York City Real Estate Transfer Taxes on all transfers to non-owner occupied (investor purchased) 1-4 family homes.
- Fully assess a development or redevelopment project’s potential displacement impact and require associated mitigation plans and fees. The City can model this off of the California Environmental Quality Act, which currently requires an assessment of displacement related impacts for development projects above a certain threshold.
- Track public investment at the neighborhood level and use this information to improve equity in budgeting decisions. This can be modeled off of Portland’s budget mapping initiative.
- Strengthen the obligations of marshals in avoiding eviction of “at-risk tenants.” Right now there are provisions for elderly, sick, and disabled tenants. These provisions should be extended to include families with children under 3 and families with 2 or more children.
- Pass Intro 3-2014, which allows the City to sue landlords for relocation expenses. If a building is vacated by DOB, the landlord should be required to pay relocation costs.
- Implement a “No Net Loss” policy at the City level.
  - Conduct a baseline assessment of affordable housing units within the city, broken down by neighborhood and affordability level (by income bracket). This inventory should include information on number of units, rent level of units, household size and income of inhabitants. A moratorium on demolition, conversion, etc. should be in place until this assessment is complete and a plan to address the city’s need is in place.
  - Based on the inventory, neighborhoods should set goals for preservation within each bracket by neighborhood and for the city as a whole.
- Create a good neighbor tax credit to stabilize the hidden supply of affordable housing in our small homes neighborhoods. Offer a real estate tax abatement to owners of owner-occupied small homes who rent an apartment at below-market rates because of longstanding community ties.

**Extremely low income residents had MORE DIFFICULTY GETTING REPAIRS DONE.**



From community survey

**The City should increase oversight of landlords and be more proactive in identifying and targeting bad acting landlords.**



To do this the City should:

- Monitor housing court cases, particularly in high risk displacement areas and refer to community organizations and/or legal aid/legal services who will do additional outreach to help determine if the case is part of a larger harassment pattern.
- HPD should create a “zero tolerance” policy for harassment and poor building conditions (meaning the city will take legal action against the owner). This includes but is not limited to :
  - HPD should send a letter to all landlords informing them of the zero tolerance policy.
  - HPD should ensure that oversight is in place so that owners of rent stabilized apartments properly register the rent, do not charge more than the legal amount, do not harass tenants or encourage tenant turnover as a way to increase rents, and properly maintain the building.
  - HPD should aggressively follow up once a determination is made that a building is physically distressed and/or tenants are being harassed – this includes aggressive and effectively targeted litigation against bad owners as well as effective use of the emergency repair program.
  - HPD should not negotiate with landlords to reduce fines in HP or 7A cases, unless there is an equivalent monetary benefit to tenants.

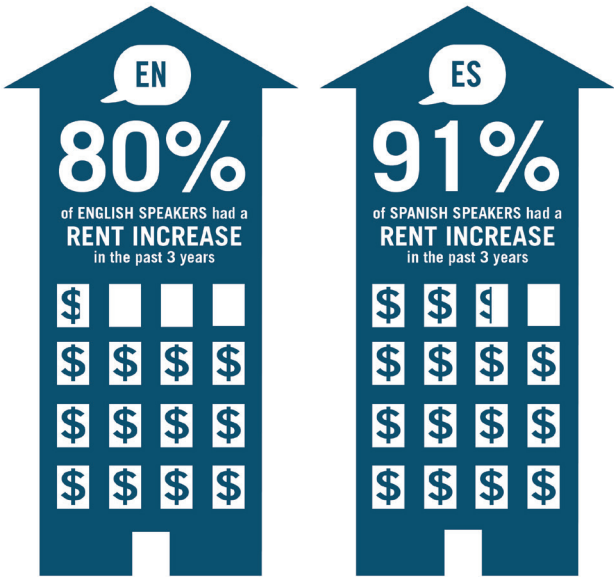
**The City should support outreach and ‘know your rights’ education by community groups to local residents.**



To do this the City should:

- Fund community groups to develop and carry out an outreach and information campaign, teaching tenants how to organize and form tenants associations. The funds should focus on neighborhoods currently at highest risk of harassment and displacement.
- Develop materials so tenants know their rights and understand what is available to them in terms of assistance and recourse. These materials include but are not limited to:
  - Information about 311 and the process to call regarding harassment and building conditions;
  - A “what is harassment” fact sheet ;
  - Explanation of what rent histories are and how tenants can get them;
  - Information on rent regulation and tenant rights;

**Housing Affordability and Language**



From community survey



**The City should improve communication with tenants about their rights.**



To do this the City (HPD and DOB) should:

- Notify residents when inspectors will be out to inspect their buildings.
- Notify residents when HPD or DOB is taking legal action against a landlord.

**The City should improve the various building inspection systems.**



To do this the City should:

- Require building inspectors to respond to calls within 24 hours.
- Ensure that 311 calls, particularly if multiple calls are documented, lead to a comprehensive inspection of the property by an inspector (not just isolated visit regarding the individual complaint).
- The City should create protocol and systems for tenants to evaluate individual inspectors.
- Implement stronger emergency repair protocol to prevent serious violations from lingering. For instance, if an inspector finds that a “C” violation still exists when they return to reinspect, HPD should automatically send a repair team to fix the condition and should bill the repairs to the building owner.

\*Note: State level demands for this section are not included in this document but are available.



**The City should make key neighborhood data easily available for public review.**



To do this the City should:

- Make the following data publicly available and easily accessible:
  - Create a comprehensive list of evictions. Eviction rates should be tracked by building and by owner.
  - Track housing related 311 calls and identify patterns by building, neighborhood, and owner;
  - Develop a referral process from 311 calls, similar to the Legal Aid/Legal Services hotline, where tenants reporting concerns are referred to community organizations in their neighborhood for follow up service.
  - Create a comprehensive list of distressed buildings by neighborhood, with all public information such as building ownership, management, and most recent sale date.

**Developers should contribute resources to prevent displacement of current residents.**



To do this the City should:

- Require developers to pay into an anti-displacement fund. This fund should fund community organizing initiatives in neighborhoods where the developers are building. The City could do this through the rezoning process by establishing a PILOT fund in the zoning text. The money collected should fund community organizing initiatives in neighborhoods where developers are building. The funding would be dedicated to anti-displacement initiatives, and could also be used for affordable housing construction and other community needs.



# ANTI-DISPLACEMENT & ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICIES FOR COMMERCIAL TENANTS

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY?

As the City changes the rules about how land in the Jerome Corridor can be used, community members want to ensure that current businesses and workers in the neighborhood are protected and strengthened, with the opportunity to continue to serve the area in the future. Community members want to ensure that new business activity will serve the needs of current residents, and provide pathways for quality jobs for workers who face barriers to employment.

The neighborhood is home to a vibrant auto repair industry as well as other small businesses, especially local groceries and restaurants. Residents and business owners fear that the zoning changes will lead to displacement of these existing businesses and subsequently to a lack of affordable goods and services: 45% of survey respondents fear they will no longer be able to shop in the neighborhood after the rezoning. These fears are well founded: nearly all the auto repair shops in the corridor lease their locations and are dependent on their co-location alongside other auto businesses in the corridor for their success. More than 90% of merchants interviewed indicated that they purchase essential equipment, materials and other products nearby. Survey respondents also issued a strong call for local ownership, with 87% wanting local Bronx residents to own the businesses in the neighborhood. The following policy proposals will allow the City to create a comprehensive, neighborhood-specific commercial anti-displacement strategy for Jerome Avenue.

## POLICY PLATFORM

**The City should provide relocation support for those businesses that are displaced through the rezoning.**



To do this the City should:

- Provide financial and technical assistance, including business loans, for local, small businesses in the rezoning area to help cover the cost and needs of relocation. This would apply to local retail and restaurants and auto related businesses
- Collaboratively with the auto merchants in the area, identify criteria for collective relocation (such as size, distance from original location, building type, and distance from transit).
- Identify a suitable location based on mutually agreed upon criteria and sufficiently fund investments in the site and costs of business relocation.
- Relocate businesses to nearby areas where housing is not being considered and manufacturing businesses have more protections, such as Industrial Business Zones in the Bronx (for example, Bathgate, Zerega, and Hunts Point).
- Communicate with businesses in collective forums and groupings, recognizing cooperative structures.



**The City should select an area in the proposed rezoning area where auto-related businesses— including auto parts, security and audio stores—can remain and be protected.**



*To do this the City should:*

- In consultation with the community, develop the reasoning and criteria for selecting the size and location for this protected area.
- In consultation with the community, identify the best mechanism for protecting and strengthening this area, considering a Special District designation, and taller heights for commercial buildings.
- Clearly define the total amount of commercial space that should take place in this area.
- Prohibit specific uses that would otherwise be permitted by the current zoning uses but that would compete with the intended goals of the area (such as hotels).

**The City should give preference for return to local businesses.**



*To do this the City should:*

- Create a system to offer existing, interested businesses in the proposed rezoning area a “right of first return” or preference in occupying new space(s) created by development.
  - Identify existing interested business tenants and document their needs to shape the design and implementation of that system as part of any zoning action.
  - Returning businesses should be guaranteed rents comparable to what they previously paid.

**The City should pass legislation making it illegal to harass small businesses and other non-residential tenants**



**The City should provide training for workers and owners of local businesses.**



*To do this the City should:*

- Increase funding for outreach and training programs that help auto businesses in the area obtain the necessary licenses and meet environmental standards.
- Offer trainings in the dominant language of the workers and/or support the development English language skills.
- Provide training in the development of worker cooperatives, which are a legal way for undocumented immigrants to earn a living.
- Partner with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to do a project similar to the one in Hunts Point to accomplish the goal of environmental compliance and improved environmental performance.
- The City should pass legislation making it illegal to harass small businesses and other non-residential tenants

**The City should ensure that local, small businesses can be physically located and thrive in the area once it is rezoned.**



*To do this the City should:*

- Adopt Special Enhanced Zoning Districts that limit commercial uses to the types commonly used by local residents, such as grocery stores.
- In new zoning, limit the size of new commercial spaces in order to create opportunities for local small businesses and not just large, corporate chain stores.
- Pass legislation to limit increases in rents to no more than 5% in the rezoning area through all legal mechanisms, including requirements on developments that receive public subsidy, and city legislation.
- Advocate with NYS to pass legislation that requires all property owners to give mandatory lease renewals for expiring leases.



**The City should develop a citywide policy approach that adopts best practices to support the auto sector as a whole.**



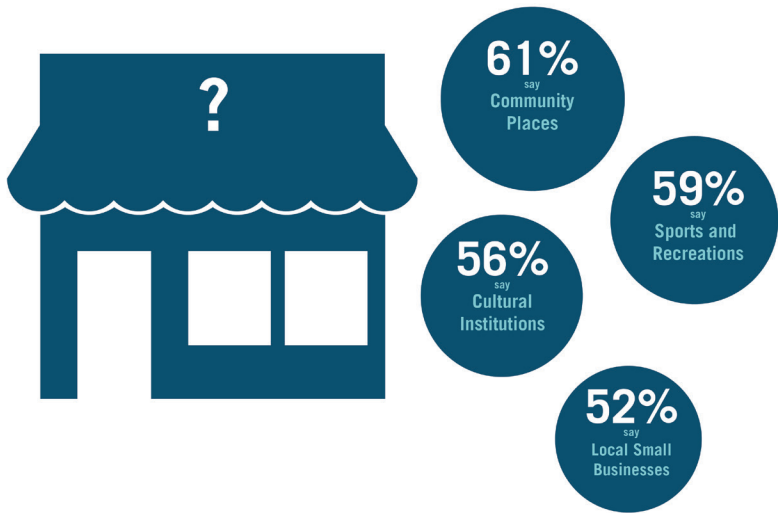
To do this the City should:

- Conduct a study of the auto sector corridors throughout the five boroughs that assesses the real needs of workers and owners and the unique challenges that they face. The study should be advised by a Steering Committee that includes auto business owners and workers, and conducted by an entity that can fairly value the contributions of the sector to the city as a whole, including the necessary service it provides, the entrepreneurship and employment pathways it creates, and economic contribution.
- Develop a coherent policy that addresses the sector's current needs, plans for and equips workers and businesses for industry changes, and makes recommendations for citywide land-use policies that address those realities.

**Who Should Own Businesses in the Bronx?**



**What Kind of Businesses Do You Want To See in the Bronx?**



From community survey





# GOOD JOBS & LOCAL HIRE

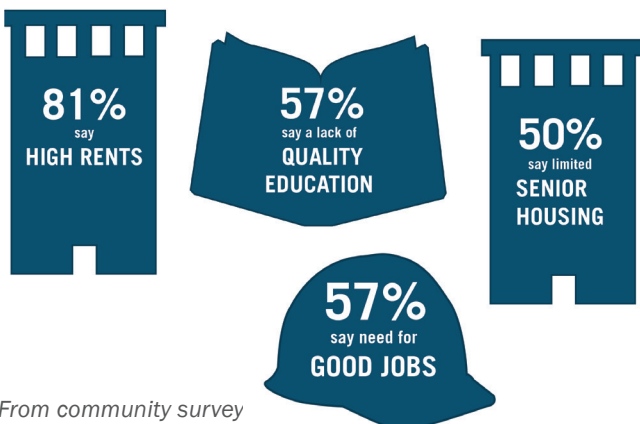
## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY?

As the City changes land regulations via the rezoning process, and additional development and construction is expected, community members want to ensure that local residents benefit most from the new economic opportunities created through the rezoning. In fact, 57% of survey respondents cited the need for good jobs as one of the most important issues facing the Bronx.

Community members report that they want such jobs to include healthy working environments, living wages, education and training for workers, job security and employee protection. Community members also want union jobs that turn into careers and the assurance that they can access these career pathways through the necessary training programs. Many community members also find it difficult to find jobs due to multiple barriers including language access, history of incarceration, education, immigration status, lack of childcare, lack of employment history and lack of job opportunities in the community.

The following policy proposals will ensure that New York City and State governments prioritize access to good, local, union jobs with career pathways and provide education and training for Bronx residents to overcome barriers to employment and ensure that they can benefit most from the rezoning of their neighborhood.

### Most Important Issues Facing the Bronx



From community survey

## POLICY PLATFORM

### The City should ensure local hiring.



To do this the City should:

- Insert local hiring requirements into the zoning:
  - The City should put a hard requirement for local hiring in the zoning text. Either all construction projects, or projects above a certain size, should be required to hire locally. Like the City’s proposed Mandatory Inclusionary Housing policy, the requirement model would make local hiring part of the cost of doing business in our neighborhood.
- Adopt a citywide “first-source” policy:
  - A new first-source citywide policy should require developers who receive City money to hire people from the local community in which they are building. This kind of policy should include overall local hiring goals, goals for certain target populations (such as youth or people of color), and/or apprenticeship goals. The City already has laws that require certain City-funded projects to pay a living wage, and a “first source” policy would build on that policy by adding a local hiring requirement. The requirements wouldn’t necessarily apply to any project receiving City money, but would affect projects above a certain size or dollar amount in public funds. “First source” policies exist in many other places and should be created in New York.
- City agencies (such as HPD) and the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) should make local hiring a requirement of projects they fund.
  - When City agencies or the EDC start large projects, they put out Requests for Proposal (RFPs) for developers who want to build the projects. These RFPs should include specific local hiring requirements and state that developers who are prepared to meet those requirements will be given preference in the selection process.
- The City should also adopt local hiring requirements for the rezoned area. The City currently has local hiring requirements for projects backed by the City

in Sandy-impacted neighborhoods; they should do the same for the neighborhoods they are rezoning.

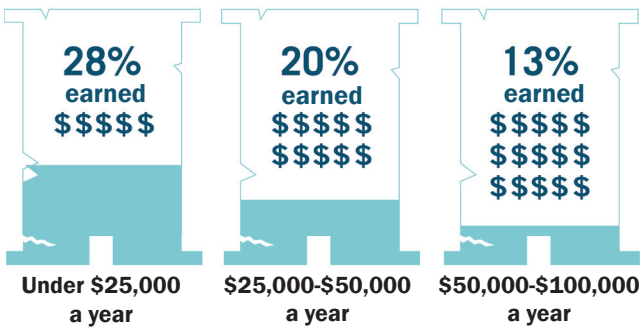
**The City should guarantee good wages for jobs created by the rezoning.**



To do this the City should:

- Expand the Fair Wages for New Yorkers Act so it covers more workers. The living wage law requires employers that receive at least \$1M of financial assistance from the City or the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) to pay a living wage to their employees at the project site, unless the employer qualifies for an exception. In the fall of 2014, Mayor de Blasio extended the city’s living wage requirements to include not only the owners of buildings receiving \$1M or more in support, but also commercial tenants at such project sites. But, these requirements don’t apply to businesses with gross income below \$3M or to manufacturers.
- Create Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) requiring prevailing wages. The City should pass legislation requiring developers who receive a certain amount of subsidy or public land to engage in CBA negotiations with local community groups, and should condition receipt of the subsidy or land on successful negotiation of a CBA.
- Provide real transparency on prevailing rate jobs. When prevailing wage jobs are available, signs should be posted throughout the neighborhood, and especially in front of the job site. The notices should explain what prevailing wage is, and should be in the top 6 languages spoken in the community.

Of the people who reported “TERRIBLE LIVING CONDITIONS”:



From community survey

**The City should provide job training & education to local residents.**



To do this the City should:

- Fund GED programs in neighborhoods where apprenticeship programs are being implemented.
- Allocate additional funding dedicated to local apprenticeship programs and implement them before construction projects begin so that there is a pool of skilled local workers available. The city must also conduct outreach so people know about training programs.
- Provide scholarships, childcare and other support to residents so they can access apprenticeship programs.
- HRA and SBS should have job training programs and transitional job programs that train residents for jobs in the sectors where new jobs are being created.

**The City should assist with job placement for local residents in need of employment.**



To do this the City should:

- Create and fund a Local Employment Network to connect local residents to job opportunities created by the anticipated development in the area to be rezoned.
  - The City should provide funding to local community-based organizations to develop a network and hire a local coordinator to engage with developers in the neighborhood, provide trainings for local residents, screen candidates for positions in upcoming projects, and make referrals. This would be similar to the Lower East Side Employment Network, which emerged as a result of a development boom on the LES.
  - The City should list Jerome Ave Local Employment Network as the preferred hiring source for City-funded projects.
- Allocate funding to enable community-based organizations to provide sector-specific workforce training. The City should fund local Bronx organizations to provide training for industries with a strong presence in the Bronx. Focus trainings on fields that offer high-quality, highly skilled jobs.



# REAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY?

As the City plans to make major changes to the neighborhoods along Jerome Avenue through the rezoning process, community residents are concerned that they will not be able to have input into decisions about the future of their neighborhoods. In fact, 44% of survey respondents reported being concerned that they won't be able to "give real input into the rezoning plans." Community members also want to ensure that changes to our community benefit current community residents, with 60% of respondents saying that the rezoning should benefit neighborhood residents most. **With 1,500 community members turning out to participate** in the town hall meetings and visioning sessions, it is clear that community members have a strong desire to be a part of deciding what happens in their neighborhood.

To ensure real community engagement, the City must make sure that residents are informed about and included in the process of neighborhood planning. In addition, we need enforcement tools and ongoing oversight to ensure that the promises made to the community during the rezoning process are kept in the future. The following proposals will enable the City to plan smartly, promote real community engagement in the rezoning process, and give residents, workers, and local business owners authentic decision-making power and oversight over policies that will affect our neighborhoods.



Community visioning session

## POLICY PLATFORM

**The City should improve structures and systems and increase resources for real community participation in neighborhood planning.**



*To do this the City should:*

- Create a taskforce open to all community members that can help encourage better local participation.
  - People in the community have the best understanding of who needs to be involved and how to engage others. The City should draw on this local knowledge by creating a taskforce to develop more ideas to support more and better participation. City Planning and other agencies should then follow those ideas to get more people involved.
- Give residents a seat at the decision-making table and a chance to vote.
- Once the scope of study is released, the City should create an affordable housing taskforce open to all local residents who want to work with officials to figure out how much affordable housing there should be, and at what rent levels. Those principles should then guide the City's plans.
- Provide resources to support CBOs in developing a community vision. This will allow CBOs to hire planners and other experts who are directly accountable to the community.
- Allow time for a real community plan to be created and for the following to happen before the ULURP process starts:
  - Create a local design statement to guide development (at least 9 months). The City should formally adopt this statement so that community members can continue to hold elected officials accountable to that statement as development proceeds.
  - Provide a chance for community members to consider and vote on a range of ideas about possible plans for the neighborhood. Multiple options should be presented, not just a single plan.



Community visioning session

- Residents and other community members should help prioritize which issues are most important. This will ensure that local residents, workers, and business owners drive the focus of the planning.
- Residents should have a chance to review draft goals and plans throughout the process to make sure that they reflect the community's goals.
- There should be a range of activities and ways to provide feedback on proposed plans, including discussion forums, drop-in days with local experts who can explain the process and proposed ideas, models displaying suggested changes, visual presentations, small workshops, and written surveys with physical and electronic drop boxes.
- Ensure meetings are accessible to as many people as possible.
  - There should be dozens of meetings open to the public, not just a few. For example, the first Cooper Square Alternative Plan was developed after over 100 community meetings.
  - All sections of the community that will be affected should be involved in the planning process.
  - Special meetings should be held to address the concerns of specific groups, like young people, public housing residents, or local businesses.
  - All meetings and flyers should be in the top six languages spoken in the community.
  - Notices should be distributed where people live and meetings should be advertised widely in local media sources.
  - Food and childcare should be provided at all public meetings.
  - When the City plans meetings, it should work with local CBOs to help get the word out so more people know about meetings.

### The City should evaluate the existing need of the neighborhoods affected by the rezoning.



The City should do this by:

- The Department of City Planning (DCP) and related agencies should analyze each of the neighborhoods that will be affected by the rezoning, not just study the “rezoning corridor” (Jerome Ave). This will help residents better understand the impact of the rezoning on their community.
- For each impacted neighborhood, City Planning should create a profile that:
  - Shows the existing needs and capacity for housing, school seats, park space, transportation, sewage infrastructure, and other facilities and services.
  - Includes clear proposals of how and when the neighborhood's existing needs will be addressed.
  - Is in a format that is accessible to community members (unlike dense and highly technical documents, like the Environmental Impact Statement), and is translated into the top 6 languages spoken in the neighborhood.
- Evaluate local needs - including needs for the preservation and development of affordable housing and high-quality jobs - as the basis of its plans.
- The City should work with residents to identify the community's assets, challenges, and future possibilities, so that development is guided by what the community wants. The City should not just think of this area as a means of achieving broad citywide goals; the community's own goals are just as important.

- The City should make its information about housing and job needs public, so that residents can evaluate whether proposed plans are likely to meet those needs or not.

**The City should evaluate future impact of proposed changes on each neighborhood.**



- For each neighborhood that will be affected by the rezoning, DCP and related agencies should create a profile that analyzes and addresses increased demand for community facilities and services that the rezoning will create. Each neighborhood profile should:
  - Explain the impact of a proposed zoning change on housing, schools, parks, transportation, and other facilities and services in the area.
  - Include clear proposals of how and when the future needs will be addressed, with details specific to each neighborhood.
  - Be in a format accessible to community members, not a dense and highly technical document, and translated into the top 6 languages spoken in the neighborhood.

**More Spanish-Speaking than English-Speaking residents LIVE WITHOUT BASIC SERVICES (gas, heat, hot water, etc.)**

Spanish-Speaking Residents:



English-Speaking Residents:



From community survey

**The City should take steps to ensure that the community actually gets what it's promised.**



To do this the City should:

- Create protections in the zoning to ensure that the community gets the facilities and services it needs before a lot of new housing is built.
- The City should put a rule in the zoning that requires developers to show that there is enough school capacity, park space, transportation, and other necessary facilities to support the people who will come in with the new development. The rule should say that the Department of Buildings will issue permits for more residential development only if there is enough local capacity. If there is not, DOB should issue permits only if the developer agrees to provide space in the development for the new facility that is needed (for example, a new school). This will help ensure that the community actually gets the improvements it is promised and that any residential development is timed appropriately with new community services.
- Create a formal opportunity for community oversight of the plan going forward. Local people can help make sure that the plans for the area are followed and continue to reflect the community's vision.

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# CALL TO ACTION

**The Mayor's Housing Plan will drastically change our city. The question is how, for whom, and by whom?**

While the housing plan focuses on preserving and building 200,000 units of affordable housing, we must remember that more market rate housing will be built through this plan than affordable housing. In fact, for every unit of affordable housing that the City will finance developers to build, at least 2 market rate units will be built.<sup>5</sup> To do this, the City is changing policy about how land is used and facilitating the accrual of record profits for developers. Many questions remain unanswered for Jerome Avenue since the City has not yet released its plan of how many units of housing should be built, what percentage of those units should be affordable or how it defines affordability.

Both the 421A tax reforms and the proposed Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program that the administration has pushed forward fail to meet the needs of residents in the Southwest Bronx, as they provide a small percentage of affordable housing, if any at all. Rather than creating genuinely affordable housing, they create market pressures that will accelerate the displacement of poor people of color.

To date, the Mayor has not yet released a comprehensive plan to preserve the City's existing affordable housing, and has not developed the new tools necessary to address this growing crisis. While we support increased funding for eviction prevention services and the creation of a Tenant Support Unit, they do not provide a comprehensive or systematic approach to preservation.

Already, the prospect of the rezoning is impacting the neighborhood. Increased land prices provide a financial incentive for owners of rent stabilized property to push out rent stabilized tenants and accelerate the destabilization that is already happening. And owners of the buildings that house small business are doubling rents, refusing to issue leases and shortening the length of the leases from 10 years to 1 year. Displacement is here. It will only get worse if we don't intervene.

We are in a unique moment to set an example for the Bronx and for the City. We deserve to build neighborhoods for the people that live here by the people that live here so that we can live with dignity and respect. This includes preserving and creating jobs for local residents that allow pathways for advancement.

Whatever the City decides for the future of Jerome Avenue, it cannot and should not move forward without adopting our policy recommendations, to ensure that progress and gentrification are not synonymous.

**We call on the City to take this seriously, to respect this policy platform as the result of thousands of voices of Bronx residents, and to implement our recommendations.**

**We call on Bronx residents to get organized.**

*See back of report for information on how to get involved.*

<sup>5</sup> "Text of Mayor de Blasio's State of the City Address," The New York Times, February 3, 2015.

# BRONX COALITION FOR A COMMUNITY VISION

## ABOUT

The Bronx Coalition for A Community Vision formed after learning about the City's plans to rezone 73 blocks along Jerome Avenue, from 167th Street to 184th Street.

## WHO WE ARE

Community Action for Safe Apartments - New Settlement Apartments, Latino Pastoral Action Center, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, VOCAL-NY, United Auto Merchants Association, Faith In New York, Local 79, Plumbers Local No. 1, NYC District Council of Carpenters, 100 Black Construction Workers, Real Affordability for All.

## GET INVOLVED!

Call or email Susanna at CASA at  
**(718)716-8000 or [s.blankley@newsettlement.org](mailto:s.blankley@newsettlement.org)**

## WITH SUPPORT FROM



**[WWW.BRONXCOMMUNITYVISION.ORG](http://WWW.BRONXCOMMUNITYVISION.ORG)**