

January 14, 2009

Hon. Assembly Member Ruben Diaz, Jr.
LOB 419
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Assembly Member Diaz, Jr:

As organizations that work to improve the Bronx community, create good jobs, advocate for good parkland, and encourage equitable planning, we urge you to oppose the proposed \$371M additional funding for Yankee Stadium luxury projects. While our concerns are manifold, our three greatest concerns are: commitments to the community made through the initial Yankee Stadium agreement have not been adequately fulfilled nor fully funded; public policy should prioritize the urgent needs of Bronx residents and businesses over luxury stadium projects; and greater accountability needs to exist for this project as a publicly-funded project.

Before considering whether to support the Yankees' request for additional funding, we urge that you hold the Yankees and City of New York accountable for promises made through the initial stadium development agreement in 2005-2006. These commitments include the construction and maintenance of replacement community parkland, which are not on schedule for completion nor fully funding. To make way for the new Yankee stadium, the city council and state legislature gave all of Macombs Dam and part of Mullaly parks. That means the community has now lost 22 acres of public parkland, 400 mature tree, 4 ball fields, a running track, a soccer field, 16 tennis courts, and 32 handball courts to the team without informing residents. The interim parks have yet to be completed and the replacement parks will be scattered about the South Bronx – some even on the other side of the Major Deegan Expressway. This project has taken away recreational space from residents and dozens of schools. In the interim, residents and school children suffer from less access to park space and physical activity than before the demolition of Macombs Dam Park, and rapidly rising construction costs have called the economic feasibility of construction into question.

Moreover, we encourage you to provide additional monitoring to ensure that local jobs are created from the construction projects. Without question, the construction jobs are a benefit, yet the city made no effort to incorporate hiring or training opportunities for New Yorkers into these 6,000 jobs. It should be noted that the Yankee Stadium project will not be an effective economic development project. The Yankees report that the new stadium will result in **only 22 additional permanent, full-time jobs and 253 non-permanent part-time jobs** (i.e. ticket sellers and takers, maintenance workers and others) who will earn a combined total of about \$34 million per year. As part of their application, the Yankees were supposed to report on the number of jobs created for New York City residents but they didn't answer this question.

Second, in the context of the greatest national economic downturn in several generations, the City should use its resources and leverage to support the deliverance of critical civil

services and to create local jobs. Providing tax-free financing and capital costs to the Yankee Stadium project diverts funding that could otherwise be used to support the essential needs of residents of the Bronx. Our city and state budgets are being reduced across the board for services that we urge be prioritized over the funding of luxury projects, such as hunger aid, housing services, public schools, transportation, police and fire departments, youth programs, and parks and the environment. As the new administration proposes to provide major funding for job creation and infrastructure projects, it is critical that New York demonstrates to the federal government that we are currently spending public funds wisely and equitably.

Third, we are troubled by the lack of transparency and accountability for this publicly-funded project. The public and elected officials deserve to have much more information, including the costs and benefits to the state and federal budgets (the analysis only provided city figures), and the additional costs of the proposed \$371M of proposed financing that have not been differentiated from the initial stadium costs. The New York State Assembly has passed legislation (Assembly bill [A8703](#)) that would help hold recipients of IDA financed projects accountable by mandating firms pay good wages and provide benefits, among other things. If this legislation passed the full legislature, we'd have a much stronger case to hold the Yankees accountable to securing good jobs for New Yorkers.

In conclusions, we ask that you oppose the proposed \$371M in additional funding while ensuring that all past promises of this project are fulfilled, prioritizing the greatest needs of the Bronx, and ensuring that the project has adequate transparency and accountability. We gladly would speak to you further about this project. You can speak with Rob Crauderueff at 646-400-5428 to further discuss this project.

Sincerely,

Joyce Hogi, 2nd Vice President, Bronx Council on Environmental Quality
Bettina Damiani, Project Director, Good Jobs New York
New Yorkers for Parks
Yolanda Gonzalez, Executive Director, Nos Quedamos
Kellie Terry-Sepulveda, Executive Director, The Point CDC
Joan Byron, Director, Sustainability and Environmental Justice Initiative,
Pratt Center for Community Development
Miquela Craytor, Executive Director, Sustainable South Bronx
Juan Carlos, Director of Community Organizing, Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice

Cc:

The Honorable Assembly Member Brodsky
The Honorable Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg
The Honorable Comptroller William Thompson
The Honorable Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr.