

Broadway Community Alliance

Testimony in Opposition to City of Yes for Economic Opportunity Department of City Planning Public Hearing January 24, 2024

My name is Laura Spalter. Today, I am speaking in opposition of City of Yes for Economic Opportunity on behalf of the Broadway Community Alliance. We are a volunteer civic group formed in 2013 to address quality of life issues on and around the Broadway corridor in north Riverdale.

These massive Deregulation Measures will have negative impacts on our residential neighborhoods. The Department of City Planning complains that zoning often presents a barrier to opening, operating, and expanding a business in NYC. There is GOOD REASON FOR THAT. In their desire to offer new opportunities for business to grow, City Planning has blurred the common sense lines between commercial and residential neighborhoods, all in the name of progress. This is problematic because by their very nature commercial businesses are accompanied by increased garbage, deliveries, traffic, congestion, and signage.

City of Yes creates a process for constructing commercial development **2,500 square feet in size on corner properties in every residential neighborhood**, where current zoning prohibits them. This is Not just a bodega as City Planning disingenuously claims. Why City Planning wants to extend commercial businesses into residential neighborhoods when there are already vacant stores in commercial areas is puzzling, especially since new commercial businesses will compete with our current shopping districts, including mom and pop shops.

Another radical zoning change allows a process for commercial development up to **15,000 square feet in residential neighborhoods if an owner owns a minimum of 1.5 acres of property**. Called the " Campus Plan" the Department of City Planning references conversion of the bottom floors of NYCHA buildings, as if they are useless appendages.

This zoning change may incentivize developers to tear down private homes or low scale buildings in **All Residential neighborhoods** for commercial use. How hard is it for a developer to tear down private homes and small buildings to combine lots in order to reach the criteria of owning 1.5 acres?

We oppose the zoning changes developed by the Mayor's office of Nightlife to promote live music, dancing, and entertainment in bars. While this proposal does not apply to residential districts, our concern is music and noise from commercial districts carrying over into adjacent residential areas. We are currently living through cuts to Police and other enforcement agencies, and fear the unintended consequences of this change will impact those agencies and our quality of life.

We also oppose the proposed zoning changes to allow home businesses in residential neighborhoods to increase square footage from 25 % to 49 %, increase employees from 1 to 3, and expand business categories. When complaints from neighbors arise, it will fall on the Department of Buildings and other agencies to coordinate and monitor. Big problem.

City Planning's One- Size -Fits - All approach will destroy the unique character of our residential communities while ignoring the struggles facing our commercial areas. **Whether you own a home, rent an apartment, or own a coop these proposed zoning changes will adversely change our neighborhoods and negatively impact our quality of life.**

Please Reject These Proposals!

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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