

Boondoggle Basics

Understanding Bruce Ratner's "Atlantic Yards" Proposal

However, There Is An Alternative To Ratner's Scheme:

The Atlantic Yards Development Workshop's *Unity Community Development Plan*

This is a far more cost-effective proposal to develop the rail yards, and is based on community input. It is designed to create sustainable jobs and affordable housing scaled to the heights of existing surrounding buildings, while enhancing neighborhood quality of life for all, instead of overwhelming and destroying it. The UNITY Plan led to the proposal submitted to the MTA by Extell Development Company. Find out more about the **UNITY Plan and Extell's proposal at www.developdontdestroy.org**

For a breakdown of the public subsidies proposed for the Atlantic Yards Project, read "Anatomy of a Sweetheart Deal" at www.dddb.net/subsidies

For a history of the Ratner proposal and a critique of the New York Times coverage of the project, visit www.dddb.net/times

Elected Officials Opposed to the Brooklyn Yards Proposal

Councilwoman Letitia James • State Senator Velmanette Montgomery
Honorable Major Owens • Councilman Charles Barron

Organizations opposed to or deeply concerned about Forest City Ratner's Proposal for Atlantic Yards

Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn Coalition

Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association (AABA) • Boerum Hill For Organic Development
Brooklyn Bears Community Garden • Brooklyn Vision • Cambridge Place Action Coalition
Carroll Street Block Association (5th-6th Ave.) • Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn, Inc. (DDDB)
East Pacific Block Association • Fans For Fair Play
Fort Greene Association (FGA) • Friends and Residents of Greater Gowanus (FROGG)
Kings County Greens • New York Preservation Alliance • North Brooklyn Greens
Park Slope Greens • Revel Arts • The Society for Clinton Hill • South Portland Avenue Block Association
Times Up! • Warren St. Marks Community Garden

Downtown Brooklyn Leadership Coalition (DBLC)

Black Veterans for Social Justice (Job Masharaki) • Church of the Open Door (Rev. Mark V.C. Taylor)
Brooklyn Christian Center (Rev. Dennis Dillon) • Brown Memorial Baptist Church (Rev. Clinton Miller)
Emmanuel Baptist Church (Rev. Anthony L. Trufant) • Hanson Place Central United Methodist Church (Rev. Patrick Perrin) • Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church (Rev. David Dyson)
Old First Reformed Church (Rev. Daniel Meeter)

Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council (PHNDC)

The Prospect Heights Association • The Park Place/Underhill Avenue Block Association
The Prospect Place Block Association • The Prospect Heights Parents Association
The Eastern Parkway Block Association

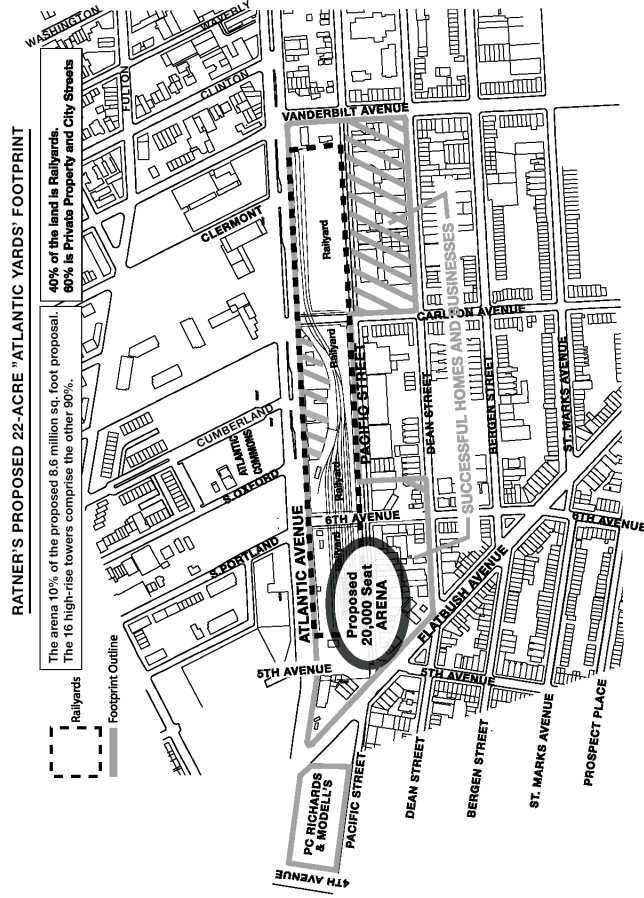
Additional organizations

100 Blacks in Law Enforcement • Boerum Hill Association (BHA) • Brooklyn Bridge Park Defense Fund
Committee For Environmentally Sound Development • Creative Industries Coalition
The Fifth Avenue Committee • Friends of Yankee Stadium • Good Jobs New York
Kings County Affiliate, Libertarian Party of New York • National Taxpayers Union • NYCBasketball.com Park Slope Civic Council • Park Slope Neighbors • Pratt Area Community Council
Pratt Center for Community Development • Prospect Heights Action Coalition • Rooftop Films, Inc.
Save Our Parks (Bronx) • Senior and Retirees Committee of Willoughby Walk Cooperative Apartments
Sierra Club, Atlantic Chapter

Get involved! Volunteer, donate, stay informed!

Develop—Don't Destroy Brooklyn

www.dddb.net contact@developdontdestroy.org [ph/fax: 718.362.4784](tel:718.362.4784)



What is the "Atlantic Yards" Proposal?

16 Skyscrapers and an Arena that will cost taxpayers nearly \$2 billion, according to our analysts (\$1.1 billion according to Ratner). While the arena is most of what you hear about the proposal, it is a very small part of this plan. 90% of the scheme is skyscrapers which would rise up to 55 stories high, taller than the iconic Williamsburgh Savings Bank, casting shadows as far as DeKalb Avenue in Fort Greene.

This project would fill seven large blocks, from 4th to Vanderbilt Avenues, and from Atlantic Avenue to Dean Street. That's almost 1.5 times the size of the entire World Trade Center site.

3-5 additional skyscrapers are also proposed by the developer on Atlantic Avenue and Flatbush, on the current sites of the Atlantic Center Mall, PC Richards, and Modells.

More Than 20 Skyscrapers!?

If you live in Prospect Heights, Fort Greene, Park Slope, Clinton Hill, Boerum Hill, Crown Heights, or Bedford-Stuyvesant, get ready to kiss your neighborhood goodbye. (Everyone else—get ready to see your tax dollars given to a developer instead of your schools.)

No democracy: the largest development proposed by one developer *in the history of New York city* has had *no input* from the local community and will have *no input or oversight* from our city council, community boards, or the state legislature. The state would seize homes and businesses, tie up tax dollars for the billionaire developer, but refuse the input of the people and our elected officials. An unaccountable, unelected state public corporation, the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), is overseeing the project and override ALL local zoning.

Why Do You Think It'll Be That Bad?

Traffic: Picture 23,000 more cars each day going through the intersection at Flatbush and Atlantic. Now picture rush hour.

Wrong use: Picture 18,000 people swarming our residential neighborhoods for Arena events 250 days a year (and imagine them trying to park). (www.communityconsulting.org/DTBklyn/DTBklyn.html)

Overcrowding: With 6,860 housing units proposed, picture at least 15,000 new residents living at Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues, but no new schools, hospitals, police or fire stations, and no traffic or public transportation improvements.

What a Deal (for Mr. Ratner)

Bruce Ratner, the developer who wants to build this project, would lease the arena—and take all its profits—for the next 99 years at a bargain price: \$1.00 ("The government will throw in, for free, entire city streets and millions of square feet of development rights). Just like the jets, he's buying the rail yards from the MTA for far less than they're worth, and for less than the competing bid, at a time that the MTA is raising fares, closing token booths and cutting service. (The MTA accepted Ratner's bid of \$100 million—\$30/sq. foot—, despite the competing bid of \$150 million from Extell and the MTA's own appraised value of \$214.5 million. *THAT is a sweetheart deal.*)

He will not pay taxes (property, mortgage transfer or sales tax) into the NYC treasury. Instead, he will pay Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) which will go directly into an unaccountable slush fund, robbing NYC of hundreds of millions in revenue. To top it all off our government is ready to use eminent domain to take people's property and give it to Ratner.

The city and state will compel taxpayers to support his profits by giving him at least \$555 million in tax-exempt bonds (loans), and close to \$2 billion in taxpayer money through tax breaks, exemptions, cheap land, and direct subsidies. AND the public will be on the hook for the bond debt. (New York City and State have each promised to give Ratner \$100 million in cash—but that is only the tip of the iceberg.)

"But I Heard That..."

.. Mr. Ratner will build 'affordable' housing.
At least 69% of the units,—4,610 units—will be luxury, market rate dwellings. Only 12% of the housing would be for people making less than \$35,000 a year. The median income in Brooklyn is \$35,000, so the question is: affordable for whom?

"... only Ratner will build affordable housing."
Not true. Any developer who builds over the rail yards would build affordable housing given the same subsidies that Ratner expects.

"... it will create 10,000 permanent jobs."
This is not true. Ratner proposes to build space for 2,300 jobs. 700 might be new. None of those jobs would be guaranteed to local residents, many jobs would be recycled from elsewhere ("retained") rather than new. Also, 11% of Brooklyn office space is currently empty. Current employees of the arena in NJ would have dibs on the jobs in Ratner's arena.

"... The project is funded by private money."
Absolutely not. Never. Your tax dollars keep Ratner going. The public would pay nearly \$2 billion for the "Atlantic Yards" project. Taxpayers gave him \$117 million to build the Atlantic Terminal Mall. We pay \$1.7 million each year to rent office space at his Atlantic Center Mall and undisclosed millions more to rent 1 million square feet of space at Ratner's

MetroTech. New York governmental agencies are Ratner's number one tenant.

"... This project will boost the local economy."
Ratner fills his projects with national chain stores (like Chuck E. Cheese) that send their profits out-of-state. Local small businesses are excluded from his projects, and suffer from the subsidized national competition. Ratner plans tunnel from the subway directly to the arena so arena visitors won't have a need to explore the neighborhood.

"... he will employ local unemployed minorities."
Ratner has guaranteed no such thing, and has a terrible track record on minority and local hiring. Ratner made similar promises when he built MetroTech, but broke them. He cannot be trusted.

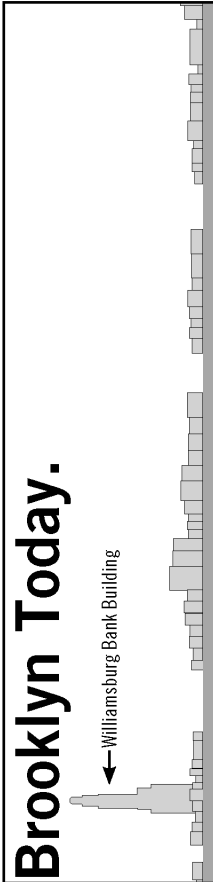
"...Ratner is working with the community."
This is not true. He is working with 8 groups that have become his business partners, and will be given contracts to manage parts of this project, if he builds it.

"... Only Ratner would build over the rail yards."
Not true. Other developers have been and are eager to build on the MTA's valuable land, but only Ratner has been offered hundreds of millions of dollars in cash, massive subsidies, a sweetheart price for the rail yards, and guaranteed re-zoning. Extell Development Company outbid Ratner for the rail yards, but the MTA's political masters gave the nod to Mr. Ratner.

"... only a few people oppose this project."
This is not true. Three of the district's four locally elected officials, dozens and dozens of community groups and clergy leaders, and many thousands of your neighbors and fellow citizens are actively fighting to defeat this boondoggle. The only two citywide polls on the project show a large majority opposed to it. **The public is clearly opposed to the plan.**

Brooklyn Today.

← Williamsburg Bank Building



Brooklyn Tomorrow?

