

The Boerum Hill Association supports sensible and sensitive development for the Atlantic Avenue rail yards site. Therefore, we must oppose the Atlantic Yards development proposal (the “Proposal”) as presented for the following reasons:

1. The scale and magnitude of the Proposal as presented – a number of skyscrapers over 400 feet tall, including one which would dwarf the historic Williamsburgh Bank building by 100 feet, square footage equal to 3_ times the size of the Empire State Building and an added population estimated to equal that of Battery Park City – is overwhelming and highly unsuited for the proposed location, even without the proposed arena.
2. The Proposal has not been reviewed as part of a transparent and meaningful process with broad participation. Such a process of review must include all stakeholders, particularly representatives of the neighboring communities who would be affected most by the development.
3. We oppose any use of eminent domain or public financing incentives for private purposes. The Proposal remains unclear regarding the extent to which it would rely on the use of eminent domain or public financing.
4. The Proposal would require a massive investment in public infrastructure., running into the hundreds of millions of dollars. This would include expenditures for mass transit, traffic, schools, police, fire, water and sewers to absorb the tens of thousands of people the Proposal would bring to an already extremely congested area. Any development proposal must include the details of such costs and identify who would pay for them. None of these issues has been addressed to date.
5. The Proposal fails to provide any relevant facts to support its claims regarding the benefits that the arena and accompanying development would bring, particularly with respect to job and revenue growth. With respect to the proposed arena, a review of comparable sports facilities has shown that such benefits are negligible, while the negative economic, social and environmental impacts for surrounding neighborhoods are significant.
6. We believe that all impacts, including environmental and economic impacts, of the Downtown Rezoning Plan and the Proposal should be studied together before either is approved.
7. The local track record of the primary developer of the project (Forest City Ratner Companies), particularly with respect to its development of the Atlantic Center, indicates a lack of sensitivity and respect for the context of the surrounding communities.

The Boerum Hill Association is committed to cooperating with the neighboring communities to further educate our neighborhood about the Proposal and to be a voice for development that makes sense – not only for Downtown Brooklyn, but for Brooklyn as a whole.

February 10, 2004