



April 14, 2017

Marissa Lago
Chair, New York City Planning Commission
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

James Patchett
President, New York City Economic Development Corporation
110 Williams Street
New York, NY 10038

Dear Chair Lago and President Patchett:

We write to follow up on our previous correspondence in which we expressed our serious concerns with the current proposals by the City of New York's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and Department of City Planning to remove the requirement to preserve manufacturing space in the City's Garment Center and to redevelop the Bush Terminal Buildings as a new hub for the garment industry in Sunset Park. We continue to believe that acting to remove the protections of the Special Garment Center District now, without acting to preserve a core of manufacturing space in Manhattan's Garment District, will jeopardize New York City's status as a garment and fashion industry hub. Further, the Bush Terminal buildings are in need of improvements along with surrounding properties, parks and streets, and we believe that there must be a discussion on how this initiative fits into the larger vision for Sunset Park.

While we greatly appreciate the fact that you have not yet moved forward with this proposal, we write to ask that you continue to defer action and engage with us first in a robust community review process both in Brooklyn and Manhattan. We also reiterate Community Board 5's request for a steering committee composed of relevant stakeholders to study and better inform any plans to alter the existing Garment Center's zoning. We hope to begin this process shortly following a forum on Urban Manufacturing and the Garment Center, which we are holding on Monday, April 24, 2017 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the High School for Fashion Industries.

Over the past few weeks, we have conducted outreach to a sizeable group of stakeholders in the Garment District – many of whom have told us that moving their businesses out of the district is neither desirable nor viable. They also universally expressed fear that lifting the preservation requirement at this time could make it impossible for them to remain in Manhattan. Moreover, many of those with whom we have spoken felt that they had not been meaningfully consulted or included in the discussions which led to EDC's proposal of its current plans. They feel that those plans could irreparably damage the fashion industry ecosystem in New York City, which is made possible by close collaboration between the designers, suppliers, specialists, and garment manufacturers now present in the city and concentrated in the Garment Center.

While no one opposes opportunities for garment businesses in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, the industry stakeholders with whom we have spoken universally believe that the lack of support for a hub of manufacturing space in the current Garment District is a serious flaw in the current proposal. This initiative also raises questions about how the proposed campus will fit in with the broader planning for the Sunset Park waterfront, especially the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal next door and future port expansion. There are many critical questions that need to be addressed, and we are concerned about how this plan is being formulated. Sunset Park is experiencing extreme gentrification and displacement in residential and commercial properties. New investments must mitigate adverse effects on lease-holders at nearby properties not managed by the City.

While we do not yet have all the answers, we are becoming increasingly convinced that City support for some significant amount of space for garment manufacturers in the Garment Center is essential to the preservation of the industry, regardless of investments in the Bush Terminal. We understand that manufacturers are willing to contribute toward the purchase of some space. If sufficient space can be purchased, it is possible that the preservation requirements could be eliminated in the future. If not, some lesser preservation requirement may work to preserve some level of manufacturing for those whose location in the current Garment District is critical to their survival and the well-being of the industry.

We are confident that a solution can be found, and that the best solution involves maintaining some level of supported manufacturing space in Manhattan's Garment District, while simultaneously investing in strategic planning for the entire Sunset Park manufacturing district and Industrial Business Zone, including the existing businesses on EDC property and those nearby. This investment in strategic planning should include a review of the City's management of its assets in the area, with a focus on ensuring management decisions are made with clear, stakeholder-supported objectives. We are equally confident that a community engagement process that includes a working group or steering committee, similar to others we have worked together on, is the best way of achieving that solution.

We invite you to participate in a forum on April 24, 2017 at the High School of Fashion Industries and to work with us from there on a community engagement process. We envision this forum as an important step as we work together toward the best possible solution for all stakeholders. Any change to the current Garment Center preservation requirement should wait until the conclusion of this process. We look forward to discussing how this proposal for Bush Terminal fits into the larger vision for Sunset Park. These issues are too important to move ahead without considering all voices and possible solutions, and taking the time to get it right.

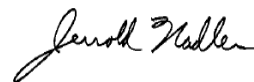
Sincerely,



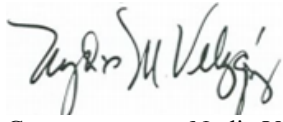
Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President



Eric L. Adams
Brooklyn Borough President



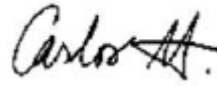
Congressman Jerrold Nadler
10th Congressional District (NY)



Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez
7th Congressional District (NY)



Council Member Corey Johnson
3rd District



Council Member Carlos Menchaca
38th District



NYS Senator Brad Hoylman
27th Senate District



Assembly Member Dick Gottfried
75th District



Chair, Vikki Barbero
Manhattan Community Board 5



Chair, Delores Rubin
Manhattan Community Board 4