



December 3, 2020

New York City Council
New York City Hall
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Council Members,

We, the undersigned, oppose the Special Flushing Waterfront District (SFWD) rezoning proposal and urge Councilmember Peter Koo and the New York City Council to vote NO on FWRA LLC's rezoning application. Living in the time of COVID-19 where thousands of people are lining up in Flushing for food, businesses are shuttered, and residents face eviction, it is unconscionable to build more luxury housing and retail that will only further make life more precarious for its current residents and neighborhood.

Nearly 60% of Flushing residents are rent burdened and spend more than [35% of their income](#) on rent. The median [income for renters is \\$38,030](#) in Flushing. Yet, only 3% of the 1725 housing units FWRA LLC proposes to build will be for households making \$85,000. [Flushing has the largest populations of seniors in the city, at 46,000 people](#), and many are facing homelessness or insecure in their housing but there is no housing allocated for seniors. No one must believe FWRA LLC is building this project for those who already live and work in our community.

Flushing has seen the second most luxury condos in NYC after Williamsburg in the last 10 years. As a result, our rents and taxes have skyrocketed due to the speculation such developments bring. Meanwhile, developers cannot even fill the condos being built at such a rampant pace: the Flushing waterfront's census tract already has a 21% rental vacancy rate ([data2go.nyc](https://data2go.nyc.gov/)), meaning 1 in 5 units are vacant. Still many more luxury developments are in the works in Flushing. This is truly a tale of two cities in Flushing where we see more and more homeless in our streets and overcrowding in the shrinking pool of once affordable housing while luxury condos sit vacant.

The developers allege that this project will provide much needed green space and clean Flushing creek. While residents of Flushing do desperately need public space and agree that a cleaned up waterway is a beautiful vision, we reject the developers' misleading insinuation that they will clean up the creek themselves. In fact, it is our city agency, the Department of Environmental Protection, that will clean up the waterway. Moreover, FWRA LLC's proposal provides virtually no new open space. Other than the approximately three-acre shore public walkway, which is required by zoning, the project voluntarily offers a mere 2,000-square-foot plaza, which will be privately owned.

We want a neighborhood that we can afford to live in, green space and a waterfront that we all can enjoy, schools that aren't overcrowded, and safe, non congested streets. The developers claim to build this for Flushing residents but we do not want this. We cannot further exacerbate the housing crisis, displacement of Flushing residents. We need a strong vision for the future. A future that has none of their residents being displaced or seen as expendable. We are in a moment where the status quo will not work any longer and there is no room for selling away our communities for more dollars. Vote NO on the Flushing rezoning proposal and work with the residents of Flushing to create a more just, beautiful vision of our neighborhood.

Signed:

Flushing Workers Center
Free Synagogue of Flushing
Minkwon Center for Community Action
Youth Empowerment Program
Chhaya CDC
Holly Civic Association
Korean American Family Service Center
Greater Flushing Chamber of Commerce
Communities Resist
Queens United Independent Progressives

Guardians of Flushing Bay
Margaret Maugenest Friends and Residents
of Greater Gowanus
Stormwater Infrastructure Matters (SWIM)
Coalition
Justice for All Coalition
Empire Dragon Boat Team
Voice of Gowanus
Queens Neighborhoods United

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Jeehae Fischer, Korean American Family Service Center
Kristen Hackett, Justice For All Coalition
Mahtab Khan, Queens United Independent Progressives
Shawna Morlock, Queens United Independent Progressives
Chloë Bass, Social Practice Queens
Sharon Melady, Empire Dragons, Queens resident 11375

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张光华, 11355
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And more...

Cc: Council Member Peter Koo