



Gomanus by Design

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16 December 2019 (Updated)

Deputy Mayor Vicki Been
Housing & Economic Development
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Gomanus Neighborhood Planning Study

Dear Deputy Mayor Been,

Our goal at Gomanus by Design is to support and advocate for planning strategies that benefit a growing community. A successful and equitable rezoning of the Gomanus neighborhood will support diversity, adaptability, and resiliency. More affordable housing and community services will be built. It will balance the needs of the neighborhood with the capacity of the city's aging infrastructure and public services. Design guidelines will be established to proactively address the impact of global warming and sea level rise. Perhaps most importantly, it will capture the industrial history and texture of Gomanus without sacrificing it to the displacement impact of gentrification.

Gomanus by Design recently met and/or spoke with members of several local community organizations and advisors: **Arts Gomanus, Friends of Thomas Greene Park, Gomanus Alliance, Gomanus Canal Conservancy, Gomanus Dredgers, Gomanus Grid and Electric, Gomanus Houses Residents Association, Park Slope Neighbors, Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation, 280 Nevins Tenants Association, and Wyckoff Gardens Residents Organization**, to discuss the Department of City Planning's Gomanus Neighborhood Planning Study. These rich and engaging conversations helped define Gomanus by Design's position on viable zoning strategies.

As the largest city zoning study currently underway, this is an opportunity for DCP to create a dynamic and progressive vision for the future of Gomanus and a template for planning in the 21st century.

ZONING STRATEGIES

Arts

- a. Incentivize and/or fund affordable live-work art spaces and below market-rate rentals of art studio spaces in: a) all new development, and b) building renovations over 20,000 sf.



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- b. Allow for art installations in Privately Owned Public Amenity Spaces in developments and along the Waterfront Access Plan.

Community Services

- a. Using zoning and tax incentives at its disposal the City should support a new affordable supermarket within walking distance of the three NYCHA campuses directly north of the rezoned area where fresh produce, fish, chicken, beef, etc., can be purchased.
- b. Locate a new public library within walking distance of the three NYCHA campuses.
- c. Guarantee ongoing maintenance and programming funding for the new NYCHA community centers. Include a food pantry to replace the one that was displaced at Warren and Bond Street.
- d. Provide a new senior center that serves the various needs of the large senior community for health, advocacy, education, and recreation.

Energy Infrastructure

- a. Require that new development offset increased energy demand with direct investments locally in reliable, clean and renewable energy infrastructure. Current Building Code for energy use and efficiency together with the recently enacted NYC Climate Mobilization Act enables higher standards. Proposed rezoning requiring developers and beneficiaries of the rezoning process to exceed City Wide standards will make Gowanus a safer and more resilient community.
 - i) Allow private investment in local energy infrastructure on public property, affordable housing and NYCHA properties to satisfy developer's compliance requirements under Local Law 95. Locally produced energy can improve neighborhood resiliency, provide benefits for Gowanus residents and for the City as a whole
 - ii) Leverage existing [and recently expanded] Administrative and Building Code to require that new developments offset increased Gowanus energy usage with local investments in Gowanus.
 - iii) Provide for energy use and carbon intensity requirements exceeding current city-wide minimum targets and implementation timelines.
 - iv) Provide funding and incentives for private investment in reliable, clean and renewable energy infrastructure, including, solar, combined heat and power, energy storage and demand management that is community controlled and operated for the benefit of families living in Public, Affordable and Supportive Housing.



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Gowanus IBZ/Manufacturing District

- a. Before a CB6 ULURP hearing, complete an IBZ visioning final document outlining the following commitments in the IBZ:
 - i. Critical infrastructure improvements such as those below.
 - ii. Workforce development funds and programs to better prepare CB6 low and middle-income residents for employment with IBZ businesses.
 - iii. Land use recommendations, and necessary subsidies, to increase as-of-right zoning envelope to maintain the viability of manufacturing uses and create necessary workspace for 21st century jobs.
- b. Prioritize investments to improve parking, loading, truck mobility and broadband for existing industrial businesses.
- c. Provide improved services to aid the logistical needs of current businesses, including improved sanitation operations from local DSNY garages.
- d. On lots rezoned, include 1.0 FAR of density to be used exclusively for uses currently allowed within the existing Manufacturing zone and allow for Transferrable Development Rights so that such Floor Area can be transferred to properties within the IBZ.
- e. Prior to certification, conduct a transportation study with a focus on the new fulfillment & brown box distribution centers opened recently in Red Hook and soon to open in Red Hook, Gowanus and Sunset Park. Evaluate the impact of Citibike, bicycle lanes and vespa-sharing such as Revel on the ability for transportation of goods to support manufacturers and artists of Gowanus.

NYCHA

- a. Leverage value of unbuilt as-of-right floor area at three NYCHA campuses as follows:
 - i. Establish local CBO to manage benefits realized from reallocating as-of-right floor area to new Gowanus development sites.
 - ii. Direct 100% of benefits towards capital improvements at three campuses.
 - iii. Fully fund support services for Individualized Educational Plans at local schools.

Planning

- a. Create Special District with rigorous sustainability protocols that targets carbon neutrality or carbon negative developments by 2050.



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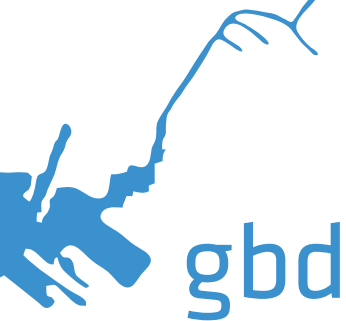
- b. Right-size proposed development so that existing transit infrastructure can support it.
- c. Establish incremental zoning tool that guarantees added transit passenger load is offset by expanded transit capacity.
- d. Commit to examining and publishing a report on the impact of the zoning within a five-to-seven year period to determine if the area has developed according to the rezoning's projections. If necessary, conduct a study that proposes an adaptation to a new set of conditions.
- e. Work closely with an oversight group, as called for by Brooklyn Community Board 6 in its October 18, 2019 letter, to evaluate how new development is achieving affordability, economic diversity, better schools, improved transportation infrastructure, environmental sustainability, and a cohesive canal community.
- f. Eliminate parking or storage uses facing the street at ground floor/sidewalk level.
- g. Locate curb cuts for waterfront properties on only Bond and Nevins Streets.

Schools

- a. Locate new elementary school(s) within three blocks of NYCHA campuses that have the same programming as other neighborhood schools.
- b. Identify specific sites for new schools in final rezoning.
- c. See Note (iii) under 'NYCHA' category.
- d. Consider locating schools at the water's edge and incorporate maritime educational programming.
- e. Locate a vocational school within the rezoning.

Transit

- a. With tools at the City's disposal, including reasonable density bonuses, incentivize developer-funded transit improvements that increase and/or upgrade accessibility to local transit, including subways where appropriate.
- b. Restore an east-west bus route serving Gowanus and Red Hook, such as the proposed B71+ service, that connects to Manhattan-bound service.
- c. Provide Gowanus residents with access to a connected, safe network of bicycle lanes and promote non-MTA transportation infrastructure as a commuting option.



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- d. Provide current and proposed daily ridership totals for Gowanus mass transit (each subway entry point and bus stop) and corresponding arrival times for subways/buses; include capacity of subway cars and buses.
- e. Provide easier access to Access-A-Ride service that does not require exact change and provides senior discounts.
- f. To verify impact on existing transit system, present data for recent rezonings and employment trends that confirms percentage of full-time home workers vs. commuters in new development.
- g. Reduce onsite parking requirements. Provide EV charging stations and designated car sharing parking in all new development.
- h. Secure scheduling commitments from MTA for adding subway capacity with upgraded signaling and extra rolling stock on local subway tracks.
- i. Present a plan to expand public transit to accommodate the population increase due to over 16,000 dwelling units forecasted long term in the potential new development resulting from the rezoning.
- j. Add ferry stop on canal, preferably near Smith-9th Street subway station.

Waterfront/Resiliency/Open Space

- a. Implement resiliency strategies that take into account existing and projected flooding, precipitation trends, and impact of proposed development on the combined sewer system. New development sites should be required to mitigate 100% of additional annual wastewater contribution to the Combined Sewer System during Combined Sewer Overflow Events through on-site conservation and/or stormwater offset.
- b. Expand the sewer system capacity through additional infrastructure investment in the Gowanus Sewershed or through new developer requirements for retention equipped with real-time controls to ensure water is held on site during storm events.
- c. Provide on water access and egress from the canal at 100' intervals along the canal, both sides.
- d. Provide access points/boat launches to the waterway.
- e. Require uses that are adjacent to Privately Owned Public Space or the Waterfront Access Plan to include public amenities such as restrooms, plaza spaces, sitting areas and other uses that are climate controlled.
- f. Create and secure 100% long-term funding for local Park Improvement District and CBO that oversees maintenance, operations, and programming



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of waterfront esplanade and Thomas Greene Park.

- g. Include adaptive zoning requirements that respond to uncertainties of sea level rise.
- h. Adjust requirements for the standard Waterfront Access Plan to include opportunities for portions of the shoreline to include enclosed Privately Owned Public Space as well as maritime dependant and maritime supporting structures.
- i. Stormwater Management:
 - i. Address flooding throughout the entire neighborhood, including the IBZ, through investment in stormwater management techniques suitable for our low-lying neighborhood.
 - ii. Conduct a comprehensive hydrology study which must include:
 - a) CSO volume increase from potential Dwelling Units (DUs) and other development resulting from this rezoning,
 - b) DUs increased from development in the catchment area that is not within the zoning study area.
 - c) DUs decreased due to multi- to single-family DU conversion development in the catchment area.
 - d) Projected impacts of sea level rise and increased precipitation from Gowanus to Red Hook.
 - e) CSO reduction due to stormwater detention by new development.
 - f) Analysis of post-Superfund project completion CSO reduction with retention tank collection of up to 85% of storm overflow events.
- j. Include GCC's Gowanus Waterfront Access Plan Recommendations in Zoning Text Amendments.
- k. Incentivize outdoor Privately-Owned Public Spaces that offer a variety of recreational activities to the community.
- l. Include the Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club's Waterfront Access Plan (WAP) Recommendations in Zoning Text Amendments. Recommended WAP adjustments were presented and received a positive response at Community Board Six's Land Use Committee on May 20, 2019.
- m. Provide "dark sky" friendly shoreline lighting with low level outdoor pathway lighting that avoids light trespass on to the waterway of the Gowanus Canal.



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- n. Provide public bicycle racks and non-motorized boat docks at the shoreline.
- o. Include waterfront amenity spaces that have public storage for bicycles and boats.

Thank you for DCP's hard work in planning for a future Gowanus. We know it is not easy and the Brooklyn staff has been terrific to work with. We look forward to reviewing the upcoming zoning proposal and continuing an open and productive dialogue.

For a better city,

David Briggs

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Executive Director

Copies to:

Marisa Lago, Director and Chair, NYC Dept. of City Planning

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Connie Chan, City Planner, Brooklyn Office, NYC Dept. of City Planning

Jonathan Keller, Senior Planner, Brooklyn Office, NYC Dept. of City Planning

Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough President

Honorable Brad Lander, Council Member, District 39

Honorable Stephen Levin, Council Member, District 33

Honorable Velmanette Montgomery, New York State Senator

Honorable Jo Anne Simon, Assemblymember, Assembly District 52

Honorable Nydia Velazquez, Congresswoman, NY 7th District

Peter Fleming, Chair, Brooklyn Community Board 6

Michael Racioppo, District Manager, Brooklyn Community Board 6