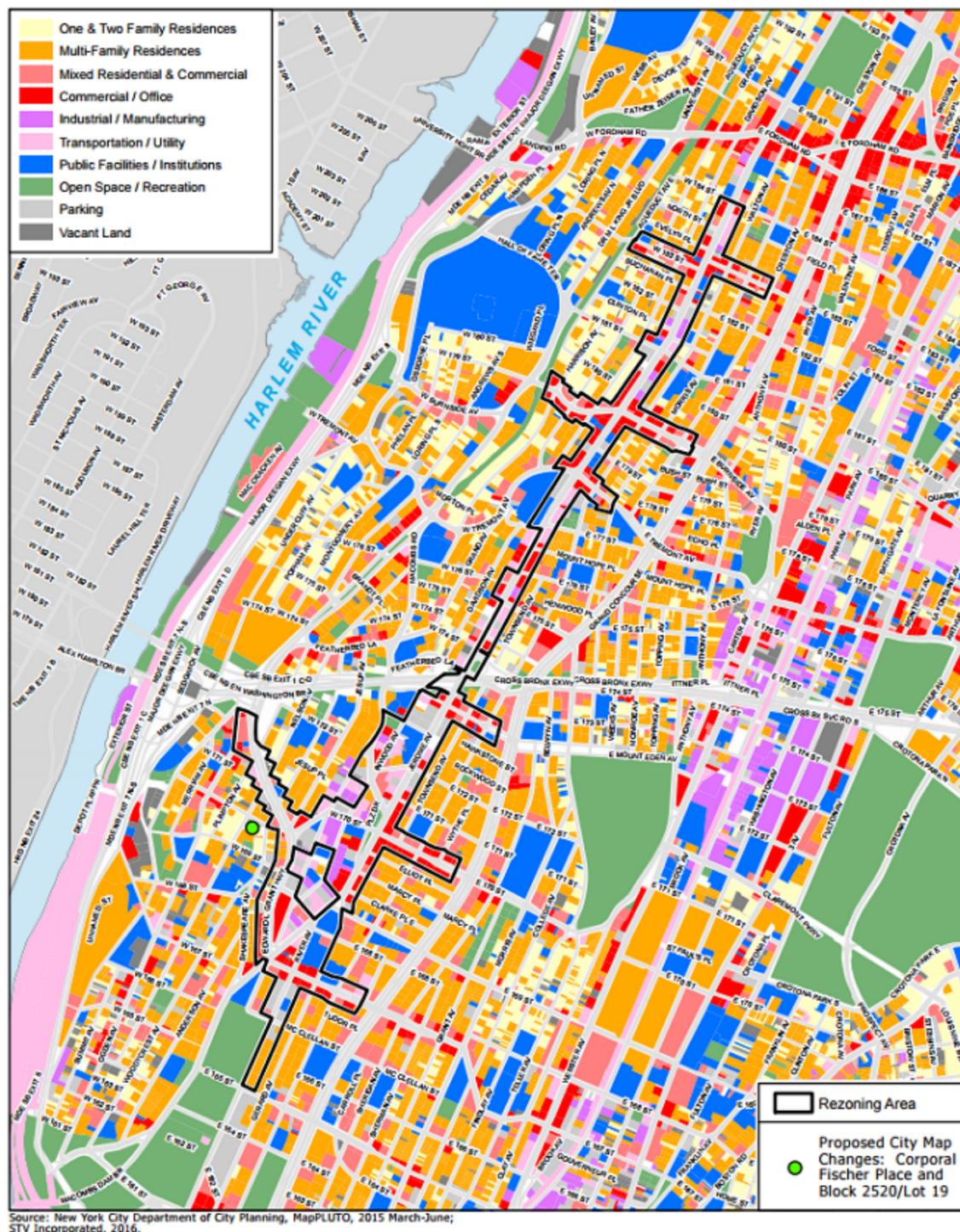


Nothing About Us, Without Us, is For Us

Sheila Garcia, Deputy Director at Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA), with contributions from UNHP staff.

The [Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision](#) was formed as a response to the City's announcement to change the use of land—to rezone—of 73 blocks along Jerome Avenue in the South and Northwest Bronx. This is in order to facilitate the construction of privately owned residential housing and to advance the goals laid out in the Mayor's affordable housing plan. The Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision is deeply concerned about the rezoning, because despite stated intents, the planning process of the Department of City Planning (DCP) is on a path marked by theater, distraction, and a lack of transparency. There has been no process of real community engagement. We are concerned that the rezoning is planning for a process where affordable housing for the middle class is secured, in anticipation of a changing market in the South Bronx where in ten years the middle class will be the minority and the poor will be non-existent. We are concerned that a rezoning built on these principles will facilitate a process of displacement of poor, immigrant, black and brown New Yorkers.

More than half of the 73 blocks sit in the poorest urban congressional district in the country. There are more than 200 auto-related businesses that employ mostly undocumented Dominican workers. Many of the businesses have been on Jerome Avenue for more than twenty years. The streets surrounding Jerome Avenue are lined with buildings that are rent stabilized or regulated in some way. Half of all the tenants living in those buildings [pay more than fifty percent](#) of their income in rent. The vast majority of them are black and brown.



This map shows the area, outlined in black, that will be rezoned. The 73 blocks, along Jerome Avenue in the South and Northwest Bronx, are in community boards 4, 5 and 7. The rezoning facilitates the construction of privately owned residential housing and has raised concerns about displacement of neighborhood residents and businesses. [Click on the image for the NYC Planning Commission Report.](#)

We believe a different way of rezoning land is possible. We believe that if the rezoning is guided by four basic principles, it is possible to have development without displacement. We believe it's possible to have real improvement that our community deserves and can benefit from. These four principles are: **real affordable housing, real community engagement, union jobs and local hire, and strong anti-harassment and anti-displacement policies.**

Our vision includes creating a collaborative planning process with neighborhood residents who represent different interests: unions, faith leaders, autoworkers and owners, students, tenants and business owners. We believe that a community-run and community-led visioning process will develop leaders and build the community power and solidarity necessary to push through a wide range of policies to ensure our communities benefit from changes coming to the Bronx.

Since the City was not committed to a community-run and community led process, we created our own. Our planning process began on March 5, 2015, in the middle of a snowstorm, where more than 450 community residents came to learn about the City's plan, the

process of rezoning, and how they can get involved. From March to June, we held four visioning sessions. At each session, we gave an overview of the community engagement process and our coalition, and presented and shared data and information on the current status of jobs and employment, affordable housing, community involvement, commercial industries, and tenant harassment.

NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US, IS FOR US!

BRONX COALITION FOR A COMMUNITY VISION



The Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision, comprised of neighborhood residents, small businesses, unions, faith leaders, autoworkers, students, and tenants has been working for over 2 years to ensure the proposed rezoning will benefit the community. Click the image above to read the full policy platform.

On October 21, 2015, we released our platform to over 700 residents, workers, and city officials!

Read the [full policy platform in English here](#) and in [Spanish here](#)! For a shorter version, go to the executive summary [here in English](#) and [here in Spanish](#).

After the release of our policy platform, we spent the next four months engaging hundreds of residents in a process of prioritizing our recommendations and since then we have been organizing to get the City to implement our demands. Our position is clear: the rezoning should not start until our demands are met so that good jobs, real affordable housing, and plans to stop displacement are secured before the speculation begins. Our priority demands are the following:

- **Pass a Law to Ensure that Harassment Doesn't Pay:** The Certificate of No Harassment would prevent landlords who have harassed tenants from getting certain permits from the Department of Buildings (DOB). In order to raise rents for new tenants, landlords often complete renovations on apartments and buildings. This law would prevent landlords who have a history of harassment from getting the permits they need to do those renovations. This model has been locally effective in the Clinton special district, and should be expanded by requiring that DOB and HPD put a similar policy in place across the city.
- **Stop Illegal and Unjust Evictions and Protect All Tenants in Housing Court:** Intro 214-A, a bill that was introduced by City Council Members Mark Levine and Vanessa Gibson in March of 2014, would provide attorneys for tenants who are facing eviction and foreclosure in Housing Court. The Mayor and the Speaker announced their support for this bill in February but we are still waiting for the bill to pass and be implemented. In addition, we need to ensure that Right to Counsel is phased in over time in a way in which every single tenant knows they have that right—and is encouraged to be proactive, form a Tenants' Association, and sue their landlord for repairs because they no longer have to fear eviction as retaliation. This means we need organizers from trusted, local community groups on the ground to make Right to Counsel about tenant power, and not just about a program to prevent evictions.
- **Ensure that the Auto Repair Industry is Protected** from the pressures that a rezoning would place on the industry. The protections should include amnesty for auto repair businesses out of compliance and an assistance program to help repair shops to change their certificate of occupancy.
- **A New Way of Financing Deeply Affordable Housing:** The City needs a better way to create deeply affordable housing for low-income residents. The current available options fail to match the needs of the vast majority of residents who will be affected by the Jerome Avenue rezoning. We call on the City to create a new term sheet that meets the affordable housing needs of low-income New Yorkers.
- **Worker Safety Should be Legislated:** The City Council must pass Intro 1447 which would require rigorous safety and training standards for construction workers in New York City.

This past September, the City released its [scope](#), which did not include our recommendations. We responded with a [letter](#) to City Planning and government officials [outlining our recommendations](#) and urging them to include our recommendations in the plan for Jerome Avenue.

In February, City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Mayor de Blasio both committed to passing legislation mandating universal access for legal representation to low-income tenants in housing court. The City has also engaged groups throughout the city to discuss changes and a new term sheet.

On March 2nd, 2017 we held a town hall on the state of the rezoning, attended by over 300 residents and Council Members Gibson and Cabrera—who publicly avowed that our priorities are their priorities.

The City should not facilitate the construction of privately owned residential housing to advance their affordable housing plan without implementing the Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision's demands for **real affordable housing, real community engagement, union jobs and local hire, and strong anti-harassment and anti-displacement policies**. We say no rezoning until all our demands are implemented before Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) starts.



Who we are: Community Action for Safe Apartments-New Settlement Apartments, Latino Pastoral Action Center, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, Mothers on the Move, United Auto Merchants Association, Faith In New York, Local 79, Plumbers Local No. 1, NYC District Council of Carpenters, Greater NY-LECET, 100 Black Construction Workers....list in formation.

The Coalition is supported by: The Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, Pratt Center for Community Development, Hester Street Collaborative, The Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development, The Center for Urban Pedagogy, and the Real Affordability for All Coalition, South Bronx Unite, Mid Bronx Senior Citizen Advisory Council...list in formation.