



## State Senator Velmanette Montgomery

*25th New York Senatorial District*

Ranking Democratic Conference Member, Children & Families

### **Comments to Community Board 2 on Alloy Development and the NYC Educational Construction Fund's applications to rezone 80 Flatbush Avenue**

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Good evening Chairperson McRae, members of Community Board 2, neighbors and community stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the applications to rezone 80 Flatbush Avenue as proposed by Alloy Development and the New York City Educational Construction Fund (ECF). Let me begin by saying that I am unequivocally against using public resources to support the proposed development of 80 Flatbush Avenue.

While I recognize the extensive capital needs of the Khalil Gibran International Academy and support the involvement of the Fifth Avenue Committee on this project, the overstated public benefits do not outweigh the potential damage to our community and the millions in lost property tax revenue. **Limited government resources should be used to support non-profit housing organizations that build truly affordable housing for a fraction of the cost.**

I stand with my constituents and the community in saying, enough is enough. We are tired of the destruction of the social fabric of our neighborhoods, the displacement of longtime residents and the gentrification that has changed Brooklyn from a borough of brownstones to a borough of skyscrapers.

Our seniors can no longer afford to stay in their homes and our children cannot afford to live in the neighborhoods where they were raised. 60,000 New Yorkers live in shelters and millions of workers who are the backbone of our economy struggle against the tide of homelessness. The very culture, character, and spirit of our neighborhoods that attracted people to come here is dying and developments like 80 Flatbush are killing it.

Let me be clear. I am not against development. I am against socially irresponsible, out of scale, over development. I am against taxpayers subsidizing private developers under the guise of public benefits. I am against myopic city planning that

evaluates projects individually rather than within the context of community development. I am against homeowners and small business owners bearing the weight of escalating property tax bills because new development projects are exempted from contributing to city and state tax coffers for decades. I am against the lack of planning that enables massive development projects to be built without consideration for the burdens placed on New York City's aging infrastructure.

Last July, Assemblywoman Joanne Simon and I submitted joint comments on the Draft Scope of Work for the Preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement for this site. We are disappointed that our request for the expansion of the proposed study area from 400 feet to at least (1) square mile was not granted. For a project of this size, which triples the FAR of an as-of-right development under a C6-2 zoning, 400 feet is entirely too small to adequately evaluate the impact of this proposed development on its surrounding area. I urge everyone to read our scoping comments which detail our numerous concerns about this project.

I am also troubled that the project's final scope of work confirms that although "the proposed project would add new population which could have a higher average household income than the average household income in the study area, the proposed project would not introduce or accelerate the existing trend of changing socioeconomic conditions. There is already a readily observable trend toward higher incomes, new market-rate residential development, and increasing rents in the study area."

To acknowledge increased rents and the trend of market rate housing development is to admit that gentrification is already rampant in our community. However, the most concerning part is that ECF essentially admits that because displacement and gentrification already exists and continues to grow, they have no problem with perpetuating this trend and exasperating the problem.

**We should not be forced to accept the larger structures, the public subsidy giveaways, the inadequate affordable housing and our communities living in permanent shadows. I respectfully request that Community Board 2 stand with us to reject Alloy Development and the ECF's applications to rezone 80 Flatbush Avenue.**