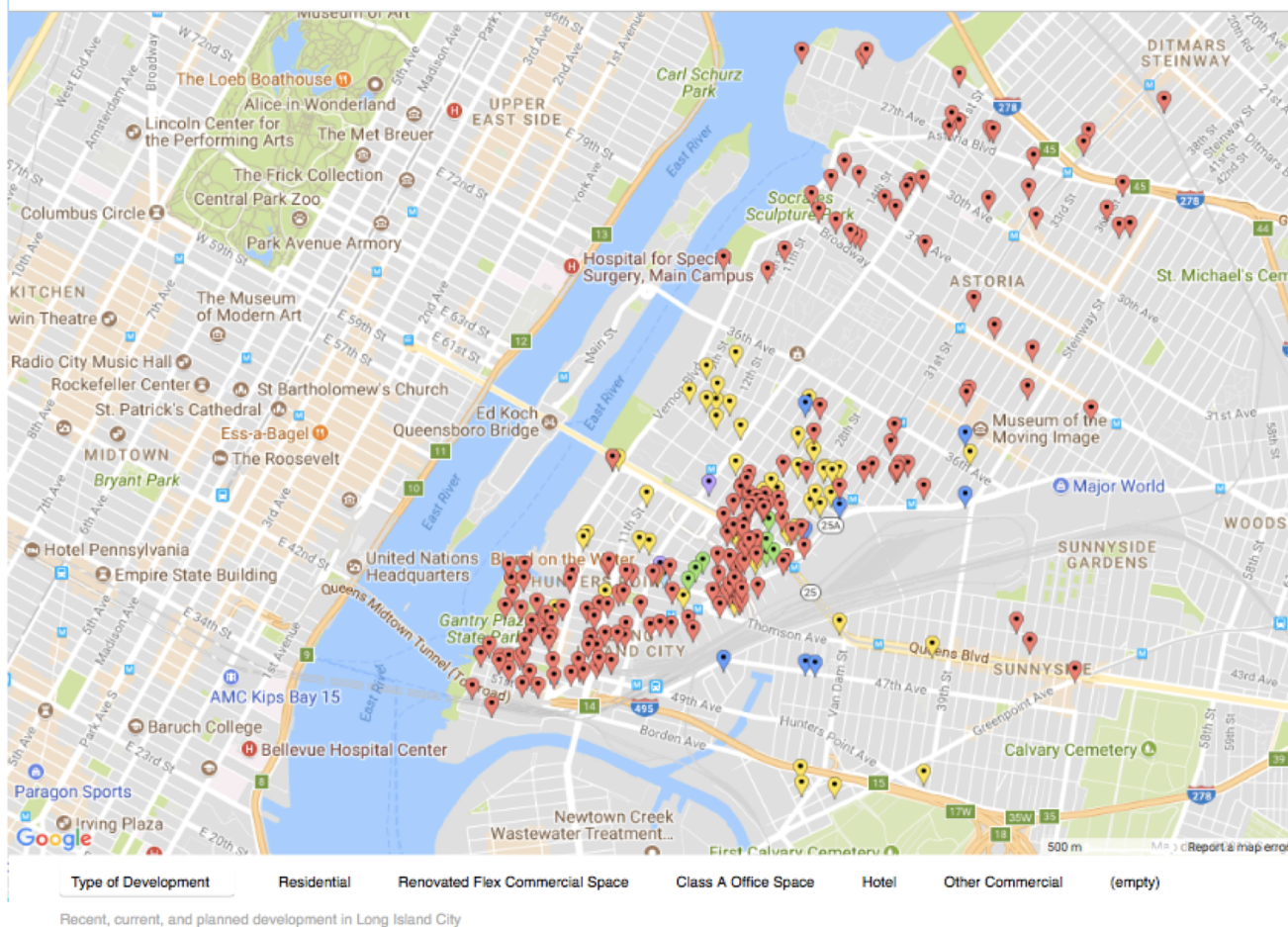


RECENT CHANGES IN LIC

Tracking Development in LIC by the LIC Partnership



Immense Growth

Between 2000 and 2015, Long Island City experienced a 56% increase in housing units. This is faster than the average rate of growth across the city (7%) and the average for Queens County (3.3%).

Housing Units for LIC: QC and NYC, 2000-2015

	# Housing Units, 2000	# Housing Units, 2015	% Change 2000-2015
New Development	2875	8,241	186.64
NYCHA	4435	5,113	15.29
Other	4476	4,987	11.42
ALL LIC	11786	18,341	55.62
Queens County	817,250	844,189	3.30
NYC	3,200,912	3,422,225	6.91

"A massive total of 12,533 new apartments in 41 buildings were built between 2010 and 2016 in [LIC]."

-RENTCafe finds LIC to have most new apartments among neighborhood across the country.

According to a recent study RENTCafé found that since 2010, Long Island City has seen the most new apartments built among neighborhoods across the country. Their takeaway?: “More than a decade ago, Long Island City was tagged to become a hot nabe. It had the 3 things that any neighborhood deemed for greatness needs: location, location, and location. In a matter of just a few years, the neighborhood has gone from dated industrial vibe to gleaming new glass towers, to take the number 1 spot for building by far more apartments than any other neighborhood in the country has done in recent (post-recession) history. A massive total of 12,533 new apartments in 41 buildings were built between 2010 and 2016 in this Queens neighborhood.”

The majority of these new housing units have gone in the area south of the bridge (in the table above, ‘New Development’. Note census tracks 1, 7 and 19 in the map to the right).

“New Development”

In 1990 – this neighborhood had 1,959 housing units. Today it has 8,241. This is a 321% increase in 25 years. During the same time frame, the growth rate of housing units in NYC was 14.4%.

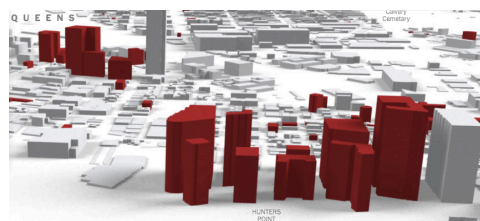
Growth Rate, 1990-2015

321%	>	14.4%
‘New Development’		New York City

Research Study Area



The geographies and corresponding numbers are census tracts, small geographies that the Census Bureau collects data on. The large circle encompasses all census tracts used in determining the figures included in this report. The smallest two circles encompassing only one number each are Ravenswood Houses (47) and Queensbridge Houses (47). The medium-size circle encompasses the census tracts south of the bridge. In comparison to the rest of LIC, this is where the majority of new, pricier development has occurred so far, and where the current rezoning (LIC Core) is proposed, along with many of the other developments JFA is concerned about.

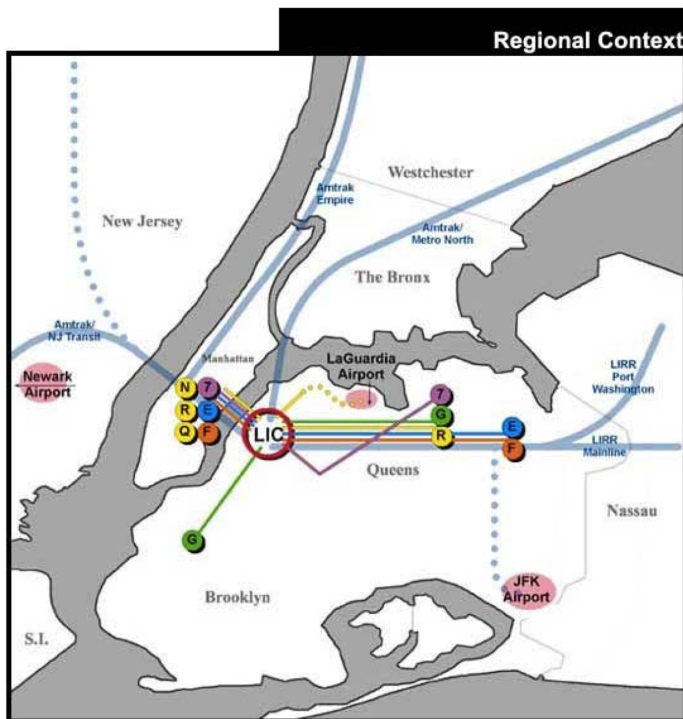


Long Island City has seen the most new apartments built among neighborhoods across the country.

WHY LIC?

"The first thing that strikes you by the whole area is just the access and the transportation – whether it be by subway or car or bike or bus, you name it, you can get to it and get from it," said Rachel Loeb, director of development for the World Wide Group.

Transportation Hub



Elizabeth Lusskin, director of the economic advocacy group Long Island City Partnership says the neighborhood, a mix of industrial, residential, commercial and cultural, has been a draw to developers for a number of reasons, including its "unbelievable transportation," with access to seven train lines between Queens Plaza and nearby Court Square.

“Underutilized Land”

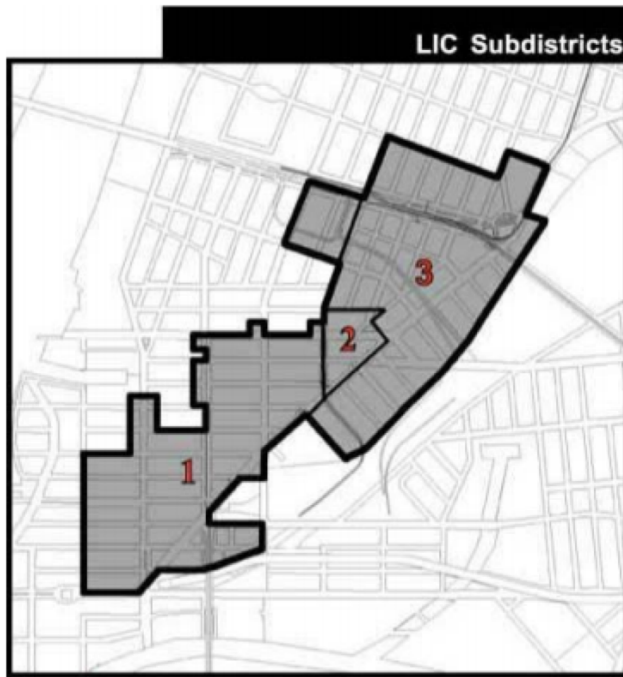


2001 Rezoning of Queens Plaza

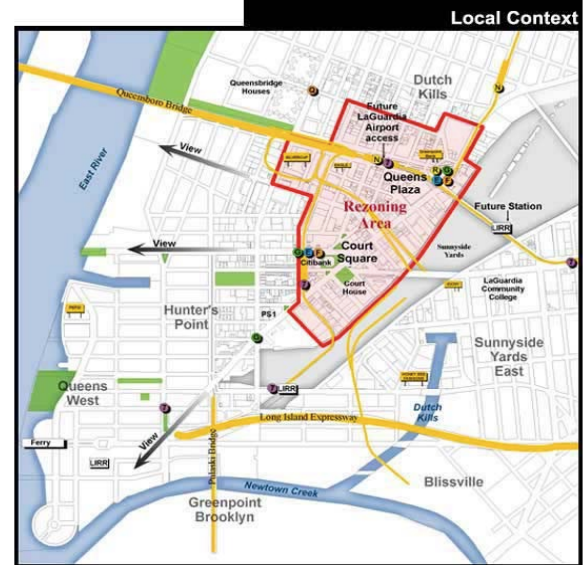
<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans/long-island-city-mixed-use/lic.pdf>

“The Department of City Planning identified central Long Island City as a growth area with significant potential for office, retail and residential development and on July 26, 2001, the City Council adopted the Department's initiative to rezone 37 centrally located blocks in the area. This new zoning will facilitate commercial development at increased densities and allow new residences to mix with commercial and light industrial businesses which are already allowed. The goal of the zoning is **to foster reinvestment and redevelopment that takes advantage of Long Island City's excellent mass transit access and its supply of large, underdeveloped properties.**”

“The focus of the 2001 zoning changes was to establish the Queens Plaza Subdistrict of a new Special Long Island City Mixed Use District and foster a dynamic, pedestrian-oriented, business district anchored by three subway stations. The new zoning facilitates commercial development at increased densities and allows new residences to mix with commercial and light industrial businesses.” (Hunters Pt, DCP)

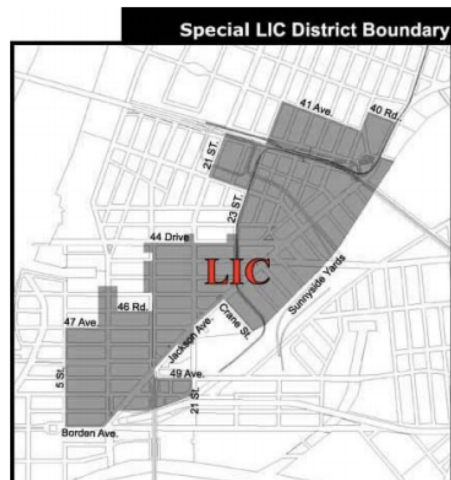


- 1 Hunters Point Subdistrict**
(Provisions unchanged, boundaries modified slightly)
- 2 Court Square Subdistrict**
(Changes to certain provisions, boundaries unchanged)
- 3 Queens Plaza Subdistrict**
(New)



“Of the 13,000 housing units that have been built or are under construction following the rezoning, only about 650 are affordable.”

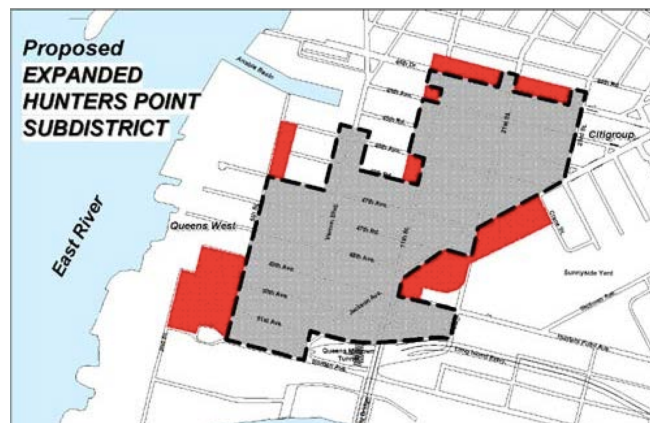
This Rezoning was part of a larger ‘Subdistrict’ Rezoning of LIC - which included two other subdistricts - Court Square and Hunters Point.



2004 Rezoning of Hunters Point

<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans/hunters-point-subdistrict/hunters-point.pdf>

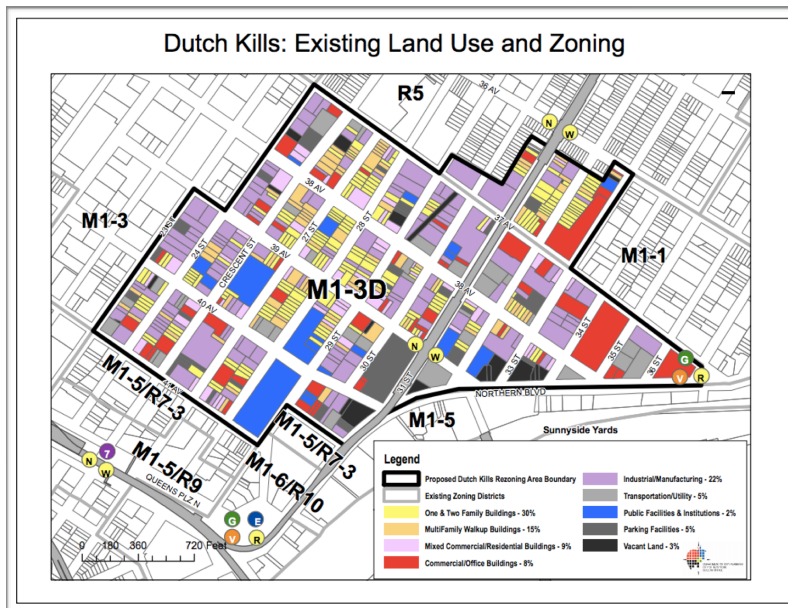
“The rezoning proposal embodies a flexible zoning strategy that will (1) remove restrictions on residential development and conversions; (2) retain light manufacturing businesses while supporting the growing entrepreneurial activities restricted by current zoning; (3) maintain the existing scale of three- and four-story residential buildings within the neighborhood midblocks; and (4) encourage new residential and mixed-use development at moderately higher densities along wide streets close to public transit and adjoining the LIC core and Queens West. The proposal would generally replace the current Hunters Point Subdistrict zoning regulations with the Zoning Resolution’s Special Mixed Use District provisions, and the changes would add certain adjacent areas to the Hunters Point Subdistrict within the Special Long Island City Mixed Use District. The rezoning proposal would pair a light manufacturing district (M1) and a residence district (R) to regulate uses and building size for each zone within the rezoning area. These paired mixed-use contextual zones would include M1-4/R6B, M1-4/R6A, M1-4/R7A, M1-5/R7X, and M1-5/R8A. For these proposed mixed-use districts, regulations would generally allow a broad range of residential, community facility, commercial, and most light manufacturing uses as-of-right in most circumstances. These contextual zones would also be tailored to insure that new buildings will fit in with their surroundings.”



2008 Rezoning of Dutch Kills

http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans/dutch-kills/dutch_kills.pdf

“The proposal, which reflects the Department’s continuing consultation with community groups and elected officials, seeks to: Provide residential and mixed-use development at an appropriate scale with the surrounding context; Provide incentives for affordable housing in areas proposed for higher density mixed-use development; Direct new development at higher densities to wide streets; Support existing light industrial businesses; and Reinforce the mixed-use residential and light-industrial/commercial context.”

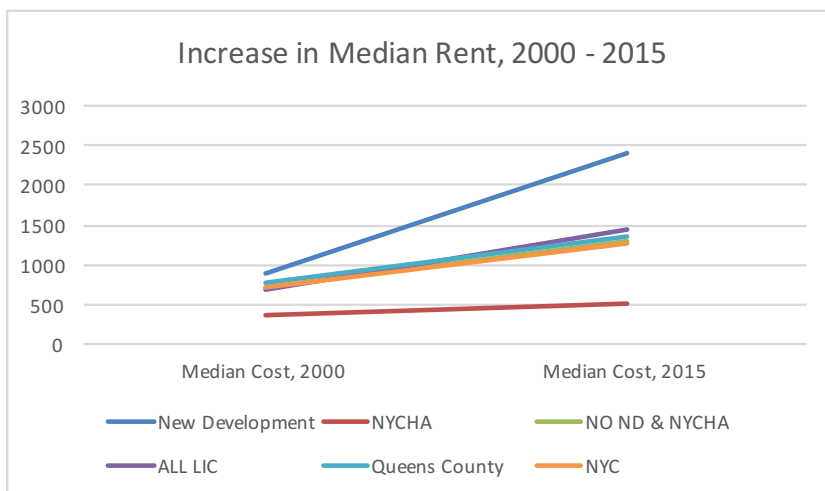


IN SUM

Convert manufacturing land to residential or ‘mixed-use’ and increase height limits to open up land for more development. Aim ‘to improve quality of life’ of community, ‘revitalize’ neighborhood.

Rising Housing Costs in LIC

Between 2000 and 2015 housing costs/values have also risen, and at rates much faster than the county and city more broadly.



Housing Costs/Values: LIC, QC and NYC, 2000-2015

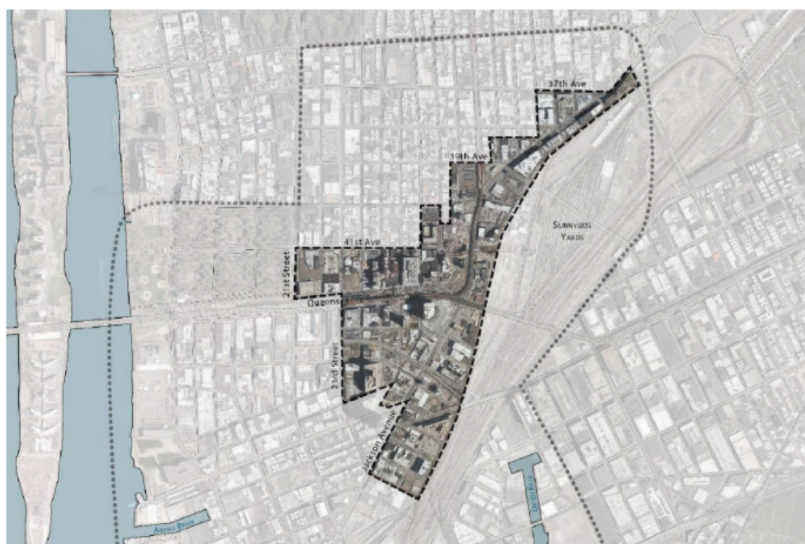
	Renter-Occupied			Owner-Occupied		
	Median Cost, 2000	Median Cost, 2015	% Change 2000-2015	Median Value, 2000	Median Value, 2015	% Change 2000-2015
New Development	\$896.33	\$2,400.33	167.79	\$216,066.67	\$709,900.00	228.56
NYCHA	\$365.50	\$512.00	40.08	\$234,200.00	\$566,100.00	141.72
NO ND & NYCHA	\$706.80	\$1,299.71	83.89	\$203,700.00	\$640,700.00	214.53
ALL LIC	\$699.20	\$1,443.58	106.46	\$210,240.00	\$655,477.78	211.78
Queens County	\$775	\$1,367	76.39	\$206,200	\$450,300	118.38
NYC	\$705	\$1,255	78.01	\$217,769	\$493,360	126.55

2018 LIC Core Study - Intent to Rezone, Again!

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/long-island-city-core/long-island-city-core.page>

“The LIC Core Neighborhood Planning Study aims to examine key land use and zoning issues in the neighborhood, but also take a broader, more comprehensive look at current and future community needs to identify a wide range of strategies and investments for LIC’s growth and vitality.

The Study is a part of *Housing New York*, the Mayor’s housing plan to build and preserve **affordable housing** through community development initiatives and to foster a more equitable and livable New York City. Housing is considered “affordable” if a household spends no more than a third of its total income on housing costs.



The area of Long Island City being considered for rezoning (Dept. of City Planning)

"In part, that's why we were here tonight — to look at the changes that have occurred since... and figure out if there are things we can do to improve the way development is going," City Planner Penny Lee said during a community meeting at CUNY Law School Tuesday night.

According to the director of the Queens Borough Office at City Planning, John Young:

"The idea would be to look at the opportunities around the Queens Plaza, Court Square neighborhoods — to identify growth potential, particularly if we are going to try and continue the evolution of the area," Young said.

"It would be with the objective of identifying if we could follow it up with actual rezoning," he said, saying that the city wants to "continue to support the mixed use character," of the area.

"We were asked to look at areas where we could anticipate more housing to occur," he said, with the aim of requiring the construction to also include affordable units. The city would look to create incentives for housing for "a broad range of incomes," he said.

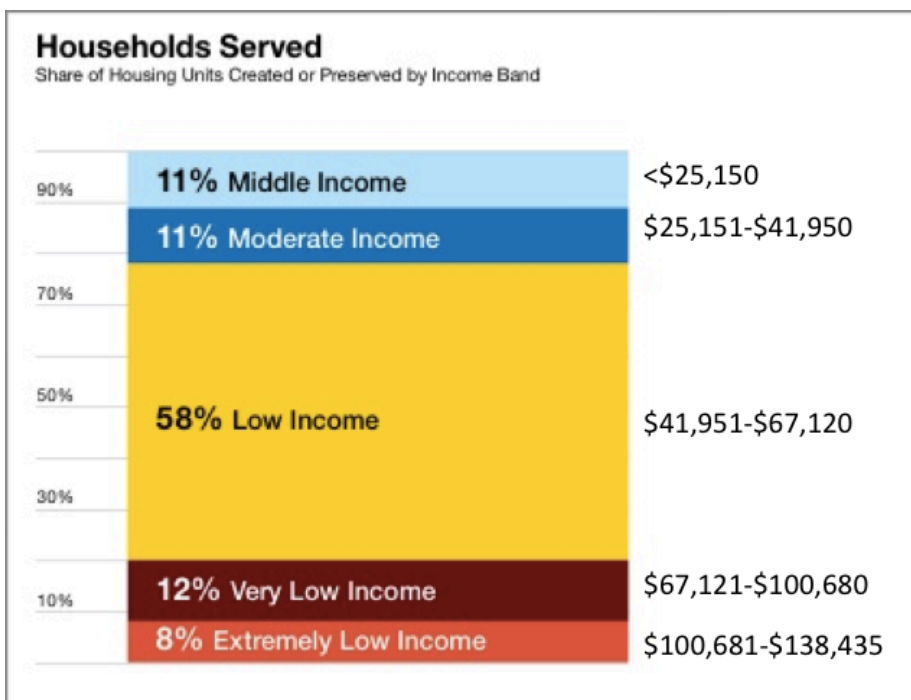
Spotlight on Mayor Affordable Housing Plan

In 2015 Mayor De Blasio introduced, *Housing New York*, his plan to bring more affordable housing to NYC. His plan includes building and preserving 200,000 units of affordable housing across the city through two mechanisms:

>>> 1. Zoning for quality and assurance >>> 2. Mandatory Inclusionary Housing

In short, the Mayor's plan involves rezoning a selection of a specific neighborhood, converting manufacturing to residential, commercial or - most likely - mixed use and extending height limits, AND requiring residential development to include between 10-30% affordable housing.

What does the Mayor mean by 'Affordable Housing'?



Community Concerns

"This plan, to me, is more mega hyper-gentrification," said Jenny Dubnau, an artist with a studio in Dutch Kills who says her neighborhood has become increasingly unaffordable in recent years. She worries that even if new zoning requires a portion of new units be affordable, it would ultimately create more expensive, market-rate apartments in the process.

"You have crumbs of possibly true affordability, but then you have 80 percent that are luxury," she said. "When you have the luxury buildings coming in, it drives up surrounding rents. It's not just the buildings that are being built that's affected — there's massive displacement happening."

Rebecca Olinger, who's lived in the Court Square area for more than 20 years, said she's wary that any changes will slow the rapid development overtaking the neighborhood.

"I went from walking in sunlight to walking in shadows," she said. "We're being surrounded by high-rises."

But Lee countered that Long Island City is already in the throes of a construction boom that's creating more housing without the requirement of affordability. Of the 13,000 apartments recently built or under construction in the study area, only about 5 percent are affordable, she said.

"If we do nothing, then there won't be affordable housing, and [we] also will not be getting the changes to really begin to right the balance between housing and office," she said.

"There has to be a little more information on the table that we can respond to," said resident Tom Ort to City Limits at the meeting, while Kenneth Shelton, a Black Lives Matter activist from Jamaica, Queens, took a stronger tone while addressing DCP: "You go back to the drawing board and figure out how you can build 100 percent affordable housing."

Naved Husain, of the advocacy group Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence: "Once a rezoning is being talked about in a neighborhood, the speculation from landowners and developers increases," he said. "They get interested in buying up properties in those neighborhoods because they're awaiting a rezoning that would benefit their profit margins."

Department of City Planning Assurances

So far, the Mayor has overseen the construction and preservation of 77,651 units of 'affordable housing' across the city (Office of the Mayor, July 13, 2017).

**What grade
would you
give him?**

The Mayor's Report Card on Affordable Housing

- 15% for households making less than \$26,000/year
- 32% for households making less than \$42,000/year
- 68% for households earning more than \$42,000/year
- 20% for households making more than \$68,000/year

Other Community Concerns & Impacts

Burdensome Housing Costs

Amidst these changes, more households are struggling to meet their housing costs.

Today, nearly 50% of LIC households are cost-burdened, while 25% are severely cost-burdened.

Between 2000 and 2015, the proportion of households cost-burdened increased by 3%, while those severely-rent-burdened increased by 8%.

However, looking within LIC, we see that households not living in NYCHA or in New Development are experiencing greater insecurity - over 50% are cost-burdened, 30% are severely cost-burdened, and there was a 12.3% increased in the number of severely cost-burdened households between 2000 and 2015.

These figures are comparable with Queens County and NYC.

Defining 'Affordable Housing?'

Housing is considered 'affordable' if a household is paying LESS than 30% of their income to covering housing costs.

If a household is paying more than 30% of their income towards housing, they are considered "cost-burdened" or "rent-burdened".

If a household is paying more than 50% of their income towards housing, they are considered "severely cost-burdened" or "severely rent-burdened".

The Promise of Jobs & the Loss of Good Jobs

Long Island City was once a manufacturing core in NYC. Through rezonings, land that can support the manufacturing industry is eroded.

In particular, attention has been drawn to the auto industry - which provide good, stable jobs and a necessary service for the community (For more, see <http://prattcenter.net/research/under-hood-look-new-york-citys-auto-repair-industry-0>).

When this land is redeveloped under its new guidelines - residential, commercial or both - it may result in a business on the ground floor willing to hire locally. However, in terms of wages, benefits and stability, these jobs pale in comparison.

When new developments are proposed, they generally include a prescription for local hires or for working with union labor as a way of subduing community outrage. However, developers can and have reneged on this promise without *real* consequence.

Why does cost-burden matter?

The more money households pay towards their housing costs, the less households have to pay for others basic needs, like food, clothing, healthcare, transportation, education and more.

So high housing costs are about more than housing – but about the quality of life of a household overall.



“City manufacturing, which employed more than 200,000 in the early 1990s — and 1 million in 1950 — now employs a mere 76,000 workers, and pay is shrinking.” (Byrne, 2015)

Case Study: 5 Pointz

Developers Jerry and David Wolkoff agreed to use 100 percent union labor as one of the conditions of receiving a special zoning permit in order to build the 41-story and 47-story towers, which allowed them to build an additional 400 units than what is allowed as of right, according to union leaders as well as statements released by Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer in October 2013.

Now, union leaders claim that Jerry Wolkoff has reneged and has hired non-union contractors.

Jerry Wolkoff said that he didn’t renege but did say he is hiring non-union workers.

“I have some union people on my job and some non union people on my job,” Jerry Wolkoff said Friday, arguing that there was no agreement. He also said that it doesn’t make sense for him to pay a contractor millions more just because it is union.

<https://licpost.com/unions-say-5-pointz-developers-reneged-on-labor-promise-giant-rat-placed-on-construction-site>

Threats to Small Business

Jobs and businesses are also affected by increased land prices, as the rents of small businesses increase alongside residential rents. To date, there has been no legislation governing commercial rents in NYC. The residential equivalent would be rent stabilization or rent control programs. Lack of regulation creates an unstable and unsustainable environment which make it difficult for small businesses to even survive.

Threats to small business also mean threats to jobs. When small businesses close, they leave their stores open and available to be bought or rented by other businesses. Due to high rents, the pool is generally limited to neighborhood newcomers (who typically have more wealth) or corporate businesses, which bring low-paying jobs into the neighborhood.

Density

As apartments go up, new tenants and owners move in. This means, for example, more residents using public transportation, and more students in our public

schools. As of right now the numbers are not showing a particularly high increase in residents, but this is not to say the numbers are not up substantially - and with the impending developments in the neighborhood, will likely show a tremendous spike in the first quarter of the 21st C.

What is the Small Business and Jobs Survival Act?

The Small Business Jobs Survival Act (SBJSA) is a bill that has been introduced in the NYC City Council that would give commercial tenants three specific rights:

1. A minimum 10-year lease with the right to renewal, so they can better plan for the future of their business.
2. Equal negotiation terms when it comes time to renew their lease with recourse to binding arbitration by a 3rd party if fair terms can not be found.
3. Restrictions to prevent landlords from passing their property taxes on to small business owners.

Responsible Sustainable Development

Much of the southern parts of Long Island City - the area where new development is flooding in - is built in a 100 year flood plain. However, in recent years this area has been deemed a 5 year flood plain, which means flooding is more likely now than in the past. At this time, a private developer, TF Cornerstone, is planning to build thousands more housing units and a school in this area.

What happens if we are struck by another Sandy? This question is both about evacuation procedures, but also the economic and social cost of storm damage. With this in mind, some community members are asking for 'sustainable' forms of development that will protect our communities from storm surge in the future.

Acknowledgements:

This report was created by Kristen Hackett in preparation for J4AC's Youth Open Mic and Forum Event held December 11, 2017.

Kristen has been a member of J4AC since August 2017, and joined the executive committee in January 2018. She is currently a resident of Astoria, Queens who has studied housing, homelessness and urban development since she was a college student. Today she continues that investigation as a PhD student in the Environmental Psychology program at The Graduate Center, CUNY. In addition to viewing housing and land use decisions as foundational for perpetuating and upending structural inequality, Kristen's intimate experiences with housing insecurity also sustain her commitments to the housing and just development movement and to her work with J4AC.