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LETTERS FROM /

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Re-Storing the Neighborhood

It is certainly New York Newsday's prerogative to support a mayoral zoning proposal that would allow megastores of up to 150,000 square feet to locate in certain manufacturing zones without the benefit of a land-use review ["A Super Reason to Fix Zoning," Dec. 4]. After all, one could certainly argue that *any* proposal that might make doing business easier in New York City should be given careful scrutiny.

Your editorial, however, seems much more comfortable trashing existing small and medium-sized food businesses. According to Newsday, existing New York City supermarkets are "dingy," "shoddy" and high-priced. Have you visited the many neighborhoods where food-store owners have bought and renovated existing structures? In this so-called non-competitive environment, hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in store infrastructure.

By caricaturing local food stores whom does Newsday demean? There are 1,000 independent supermarkets in New York City. Over 60 percent of these stores are owned by minority entrepreneurs. There are also over 5,000 Korean-owned delis and salad bars delivering quality food to communities that had been previously abandoned.

If the mayor's zoning proposal is going to be examined carefully, it should be done without resorting to calumny. If your prejudicial analysis is jettisoned, one is left simply with a zoning proposal that would lead to the greatest land-grab this city has ever seen. Real estate developers will get fat as land formerly held for factories is re-zoned for megastore speculators.

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Editor's note: The writer is with the Neighborhood Small Business Association.