

# DAILY NEWS

## Doing the right thing

**E**very once in a while, government gets it right. The Bloomberg administration did the correct thing by asking a developer to transform a swath of the South Bronx that includes the gritty and perennially underused Bronx Terminal Market. And the City Council did the right thing by voting last week to rezone the area to make way for a retail complex, the Gateway Center.

The new development, set to open in 2009, will generate an estimated 3,000 construction jobs and 2,000 permanent retail jobs in a borough that ranks among the nation's 10 poorest counties.

That's not all. One of the most controversial parts of the Gateway Center project, the opening of a BJ's Warehouse Club, was resolved in a way that could set a precedent for future big-box development around the city. BJ's, which normally charges a \$45 annual membership fee and refuses to accept food stamps or WIC payments, will change its rules: The proposed South Bronx store will allow both. Additionally, the project developer, the Related Companies, has agreed to kick in half the membership fee for five years for 2,000 families who live in the area and receive public assistance.

That's only fair: 58% of the residents near the Gateway project are on public assistance, and 40,000 use food stamps. They, more than anybody, need access to the discounted prices offered by BJ's. And they'll get it, thanks to a community-benefits agreement negotiated by the developer and a coalition of neighborhood organizations.

Not a bad piece of work at all. The Council, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión and the mayor's staff should all be proud of themselves. And BJ's should give serious consideration to extending its acceptance of food stamps and WIC to its locations in East New York and other needy city neighborhoods.