



# Mall plan approved

## Related Cos. gets Bronx Terminal Market, promises benefits and jobs to the community

**CITY HALL** After a year and a half of debate, the City Council voted overwhelmingly yesterday to approve the controversial Gateway Center at the Bronx Terminal Market.

A pet project of the Bloomberg administration and local Bronx politicians, the Gateway mall is supposed to bring 5,000 temporary and permanent jobs to the state's only county with a double-digit unemployment rate.

But the \$400 million plan to erect a mega-mall nearby Yankee Stadium has also been criticized as a "sweetheart deal" to a politically connected developer, slammed for its shabby treatment of the market's 22 existing merchants, and called a "Trojan horse"

for a big-box retailer.

The supporters' case was bolstered in recent months by the crafting of a community benefits agreement. The contract signed by the developer, the Related Companies, promises to provide money and services to local residents.

The district's Council member Maria del Carmen Arroyo touted the benefits of the agreement, which include \$3 million over nine years for a job training program as well as a 3,500-square-foot facility offering discount child care. The pact also promises to set aside jobs for residents and retail space for local business.

"This community benefits agreement will serve as a model not just for the city

but for our nation," Arroyo said. "The developers in this city, I hope you're paying attention, because it's only going to get better."

Arroyo said the agreement was written with the input of 13 neighborhood groups and "representatives from every elected official in the area." But not all of the groups Arroyo mentioned decided to sign off on the agreement, noting that the job guarantees and other promises are sometimes referred to as "goals."

Community Board 4 member Pasquale Canale was on the task force.

"People were handpicked by the borough president," said Canale, president of 161st

Merchants. "But everything was rushed through — they said, quick, quick, you have five weeks to come up with the agreement." Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion said the agreement was developed "over months."

In a committee room off the Council chambers, a group of Bronx politicians posed for photos before signing the agreement with the Related Companies.

"I think they've got it backwards," said Stanley Mayer, one of the 17 remaining vendors who will be evicted from the Bronx Terminal Market by June. "You do the agreement first, then you approve the project."

According to Carrion, the

remaining vendors will get \$30 per square foot to relocate, up from the previous offer of \$10. Related is paying \$7 of that, after deducting \$3 per square foot to cover its legal costs. There are strings attached to the offer, with the amounts declining if the businesses leave the Bronx.

"We're trying to relocate, but there's no space available in the Bronx," complained merchant John Romagosa. "The problem is we're all going to be scattered. We were a market; now we'll just be a store. Related will collect \$40 million a year, and they'll pay the city \$2 million. We were screwed."

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