

Neighborhood Retail Alliance

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Memorandum

From: Dr. Richard Lipsky

To: Bronx Terminal Market Supporters

Subject: Creating a Yes, But Coalition

Date: 6/13/05

As the Related Companies attempt to steamroll its way towards land use approval of its Gateway Mall project it is important to outline a strategy that will put us in a position to insure that the development proceeds with the maximum amount of community input and without certain features that would have a negative impact on important neighborhood resources. It is assumed that, by community input, we are referring to giving the community an opportunity to tailor the development in a way that maximizes its benefits to local residents and the surrounding community.

1) **No Certification without negotiation and adjudication**

We should be looking to marshal community resources, with the support of Bronx Elected Officials, to pressure City Planning to hold off on the land use certification of Gateway until an array of outstanding issues are addressed

a. **Merchant Evictions**

With the legality of the lease agreement in question and the de facto stay of merchant evictions it is unseemly to press forward with the rezoning of

the Bronx Terminal Market property. City Planning should not prejudge the outcome of the court's actions

b. Merchant Relocation

With Adolfo Carrion telling one and all that he is devising a relocation plan for the Market, and with Congressmen Serrano stating that redevelopment should not proceed without a clear relocation plan, it is not defensible for the planning agency to proceed to ULURP this development

c. Community Benefits Agreement

We know that Related has had discussions with certain elected officials and with CB#4. Undoubtedly there have been promises made. All of which amounts to nothing without a negotiated agreement between Related, EDC and a designated community coalition.

i. Job Availability

The kinds of jobs that will be made available and their approximate wages and benefits need to be clearly delineated. Who will be eligible? How will they be advertised? Will a job training program be constituted?

ii. Minority Contractors

What provisions are being made to insure that minority contracting firms will be hired? How will this process insure fairness to local firms in the area?

iii. **Affordable Housing**

What we hear is that the Gateway project will not include any housing component. Why not? This is the largest undeveloped piece of city property left in the Bronx and its waterfront location should make housing an attractive option. A community benefit agreement might look to negotiate affordable housing since reports indicate that a great deal of public money will be made available to this site

iv. **Local Store Ownership**

Published reports indicate that the Gateway will have a “homegrown” flavor with a mixture of local stores fronting an esplanade. How will this opportunity be made available to existing local businesses?

2) **Complete Transparency**

It is important that the Yes, But Coalition demand that the city reveal all of the public money being earmarked to the development. The project’s benefits need to be juxtaposed to the total amount of taxpayer money that will be allocated to Gateway. This is a crucial issue that also needs to be fully vetted prior to any ULURP commencing.

a. **Access Ramps**

In addition, there is an open question about the project’s ramp access to the Major Deegan. Currently, we believe that the land use application does

not address the ramp issue. It strains credulity that a project with out 1 million square feet of retail space could be certified before a clear plan is revealed with State DOT or the status or the status of the access ramps. As a corollary, we need to know before certification who is going to spend for the reconstruction of the ramps. This cost, if it is borne by the taxpayers, can add hundreds of millions of dollars to the allocated public funds.

b. Tenancy

Related must clearly delineate who its tenants will be prior to certification. From our discussions with businesses, labor and community stakeholders, it is clear that certain box stores – Wal-Mart and BJ’s come to mind – are not acceptable because of both their employment practices as well as their likely impact on existing neighborhood business.

The Yes, But Coalition recognizes the benefits of redeveloping the Bronx Terminal Market area. That being said, the entire manner in which this land use process is being conducted, from the original change of leaseholders to the exclusion of community input, sets an unacceptable precedent. Communities all over the city are partnering with developers to craft projects so that they are complementary to local needs and outlooks. The Related Companies avoidance of this desirable protocol needs to be altered and a joint venture must be immediately established with the impacted local communities.