

DISTRICT OFFICE  
47-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD SUITE 205  
NEW YORK, NY 11104  
TEL: (718) 383-9566  
FAX: (718) 383-9076

CITY HALL OFFICE  
250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1749  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
TEL: (212) 788-7370  
FAX: (212) 513-7195  
jwon@council.nyc.gov



THE COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**JULIE WON**  
COUNCIL MEMBER, 26<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT, QUEENS

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# Land Use Guiding Principles

Council District 26: Long Island City, Astoria, Dutch Kills, Sunnyside, and Woodside

## Introduction

Council District 26 is the second most developed in New York City.<sup>1</sup> Unlike other large cities in our country, New York City does not have a comprehensive, community-driven planning process for land use. Instead, as we witnessed in District 26, we have rezonings— spot zonings— for new luxury developments. While District 26 is one of the most aggressively developed districts in the city, the affordability crisis has worsened during the pandemic, as 90% of units were built at market rate in 2020.

High rents continue to displace people of color, immigrants, and working class New Yorkers away from their homes, families, and communities. In fact, 37% of renters in District 26 are rent-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on rent alone; while even worse, 22% of renters are severely rent-burdened, spending more than 50% their income on rent. This means that 60% of renters in District 26 are rent-burdened or severely rent-burdened.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, our land use process largely excludes everyday New Yorkers, putting the majority of the planning in the hands of landowners and lenders. The City's current land use process often forces communities into making an impossible decision: either accept a proposal that did not originate from the community, or reject it in full. Therefore, we have outlined key principles below to address our community's needs and concerns which have surfaced repeatedly over the years.

Our office's purpose for this document is to define and promote the community's role in the land use process in our district as well as define our expectations for developers doing business in our district. This is a guiding document that will evolve over time with the changing needs of our district and our city.

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<sup>1</sup> New York City Department of City Planning | Housing and Economic Development Division. "Where Is Housing Being Added in New York City?" *ArcGIS StoryMaps*, Esri, 6 Jan. 2022, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/2053a95b1f4c44cd97e6a58f1b31dd06>.

<sup>2</sup> American Community Survey 2014-2019, QN01 Astoria-Queensbridge (CD1 Equivalent) + QN02 Long Island City-Sunnyside-Woodside (CD2 Approximation). Population FactFinder from NYC Planning. Accessed 7 Jul 2022.

## Land Use Guiding Principles for District 26

<b>Community Engagement</b>	<b>Affordability</b>	<b>Community Investment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community input must be incorporated before certification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Language access should be built into all stages of the process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> New developments must provide relocation assistance for commercial tenants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> New developments must notify the community of any expected impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Proposals should add more affordability beyond MIH Option 1 before certification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Developments must combat displacement and prioritize supportive housing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Commercial rent should be affordable and commercial spaces should accommodate mom &amp; pop shops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Investments in public infrastructure should match the scale of the project</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> New development should be carbon neutral and sustainable long term</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rezoning in M-zones should maintain manufacturing square footage and include deep affordability</li> </ul>
<b>Labor</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> New large scale developments should use union labor which guarantees quality construction, family sustaining local jobs, and apprenticeship &amp; training opportunities for local residents</li> </ul>		

# Community Engagement

## **Community input must be incorporated before certification.**

- Residents, community organizations, and businesses should be partners in the process when conceptualizing and designing any new development before project certification.
- Developers must canvass residents and businesses in the rezoning area and record their feedback before certification. Survey methodology, contact rate, and results collected should be shared publicly.
- Developers should consult with local nonprofits like CAAAV, ANHD, Woodside on the Move, Astoria Tenant Association, Western Queens Community Land Trust, Ravenswood Land Trust, Justice 4 All Coalition, Hope Astoria, Cosmopolitan Houses Tenants Union, Dutch Kills Civic Association, Court Square Civic Association, Hunters Point Civic, LIC Coalition, and other local groups.
- Racial Equity Report should be distributed to Community Boards and community organizations listed in the previous bullet 15 days after certification.
- Environmental Impact Statement should be distributed to Community Boards and community organizations at certification.

## **Language access should be built into all stages of the process.**

- Any development in our district needs to communicate in the languages and method of communication of people living and working near the development area.
- Communication in the five most common languages in the project area should be present at all stages, from before the project is conceived and certified and throughout the ULURP process.
- Developers should pay for culturally competent translations and interpreters for public hearings. Google Translate is **NOT** an accurate or acceptable language translator.

## **New developments must provide relocation assistance for commercial tenants.**

- Businesses displaced by the development itself must be provided with timely notification and financial support to relocate.

## **New developments must notify the community of any expected impacts.**

- Nearby residents and businesses must be provided with timely notifications of construction impacts in their language and have a reliable contact for questions.

# Affordability

## **Proposals should add more affordability beyond MIH Option 1 before certification.**

- New developments should provide more income-restricted units at deeper affordability than required by MIH Option 1.
- Area Median Income (AMI) for the New York City area does not reflect the actual incomes of District 26 residents. So-called “affordable” units are too expensive for the majority of our neighbors.<sup>3</sup>
- Rents should be affordable for the 53% of Community Board 1 & 2 residents that earn less than \$75,000 and the 25% of households in my district make less than \$35,000<sup>4</sup>.

## **Developments must combat displacement and prioritize supportive housing.**

- Affordable housing units should prioritize low-income community district residents to combat displacement.
- District 26 has one of the highest density of unhoused populations in Queens. Developers must work with HPD to create stable housing for those moving out of the shelter system, including people with CityFHEPS and other vouchers.
- Development should address the needs of seniors and build supportive housing.
- New developments should prioritize two and three bedroom apartments that accommodate families.

## **Commercial rent should be affordable and commercial spaces should accommodate mom & pop shops.**

- New development must provide more opportunity for existing small, local businesses and more opportunity for residents to build their own businesses. The displacement of small, local businesses undermines the quality of life and survival of our neighbors.
- New development should create a grant fund to ensure the survival of businesses near the project site, commensurate with the scale of the project.

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<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey 2014-2019, QN01 Astoria-Queensbridge (CD1 Equivalent) + QN02 Long Island City-Sunnyside-Woodside (CD2 Approximation). Population FactFinder from NYC Planning. Accessed 7 Jul 2022.

<sup>4</sup> American Community Survey 2014-2019, QN01 Astoria-Queensbridge (CD1 Equivalent) + QN02 Long Island City-Sunnyside-Woodside (CD2 Approximation). Population FactFinder from NYC Planning. Accessed 7 Jul 2022.

# Community Investment

## **Investments in public infrastructure should match the scale of the project.**

- New development must enhance public infrastructure, such as improved ADA accessibility, schools, parks, streets, transportation, sewage and plumbing, etc.
- New developments must work with the City Council office to see if local needs can be met in terms of community space or services.

## **New Development should be carbon neutral and sustainable long term.**

- New development should be carbon neutral, contribute to reducing emissions, and run on renewable energy — not fossil fuels.
- During Hurricane Ida, our district saw some of the worst flooding and loss of life. Proposed developments should present a comprehensive plan for green infrastructure to manage and capture stormwater.
- Developments should also present comprehensive plans to mitigate coastal flooding, combined sewage overflows, and dangerously high temperatures.
- In some areas, the zoning code requires developers to build parking. This requirement raises the cost of new housing and creates a reliance on motor vehicles, poor air quality, and traffic violence. New developments should meet only the minimum required parking and explore all avenues for reduced parking requirements.
- New development should maximize the amount of permeable surfaces.

## **Rezoning in M-zones should maintain manufacturing square footage and include deep affordability.**

- Profit from rezoning manufacturing areas to mixed use or residential is significant, therefore the community benefit provided must also be significant.
- Manufacturing spaces provide strong, middle class jobs and should be preserved.

# Labor

## **New large-scale developments should use union labor which guarantees quality construction, family sustaining local jobs, and apprenticeship/training opportunities for District 26 residents.**

- District 26 is home to many union members, apprenticeship and training centers. New developments should provide jobs to the local economy.
- New development should use unionized labor in every step of construction and maintenance, including signing a Project Labor Agreement (PLA).
- New developments should utilize 30% MWBE contractors and 30% local labor.