



## Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation

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### Gowanus Canal Corridor Scoping Hearing

Good afternoon. My name is Rachael Dubin and I am the Deputy Director of the Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC), a non-profit organization that is charged with serving roughly 2000 manufacturing and industrial businesses in the Red Hook, Gowanus, and Sunset Park sections of Brooklyn.

I have participated in nearly all of the public meetings that have been conducted on the Gowanus since DCP first started studying the area for a rezoning in 2007. I think it's possible to achieve the goals that DCP has outlined during the course of those meetings—specifically more residential development and affordable housing, access to the water's edge, and recreational use of the Canal—while at the same time ensuring that the Gowanus continues to be a major hub of manufacturing and industrial activity.

New York City has a small and shrinking amount of M-Zoned land, accounting for less than 6% of the City's total acreage. This rezoning would decrease that number by another 543,716 sq ft. If the current economic downturn has taught us anything, it is that as a City, we cannot be overly dependent on just a few sectors. Manufacturing businesses not only pay on average \$15,000 more than retail and \$20,000 more than restaurant sector jobs, but they provide employment opportunities for individuals that may face obstacles to other forms of employment. Therefore, we should be cautious when making decisions that would reduce m-zones any further.

In order to achieve DCP's stated goals, while at the same time preserving manufacturing businesses and blue collar jobs, SBIDC requests that the EIS evaluate the following scenarios:

1. Redraw the boundary of Subarea B so that the northern most boundary of the Subarea is DeGraw Street. The remainder of the Subarea should be included in Subarea C.

Several businesses (See Appendix A) have relocated to this area in recent years, made significant investments in their facilities and workforce, and rely on the proximity of similar businesses in the area to flourish. Because they all rent, they would all be susceptible to displacement if this rezoning were to go forward as is.

2. Limit an MX rezoning to the west side of the Canal and strengthen the manufacturing on the East side of the Canal.

Given the high density of industrial jobs on the East side of the Canal and the potential for further industrial growth and job creation, SBIDC believes that further

residential development should be limited to the West side of the Canal. The Toll Bros Site and Public Place developments will create roughly 1000 units of housing and will also create the open space, access to the water's edge, and recreational boating launches that portions of the community desire.

DCP's current plan calls for an MX rezoning on the East side of the Canal. SBIDC questions if it makes sense to introduce residential in between two thoroughly industrial areas (Subarea E, which is the IBZ, to the South, and Subarea C to the north). We believe an MX on the east side of the Canal would attract more service-oriented uses to subareas C and E, which would put upward pressure on real estate prices, and industrial businesses would not be able to compete.

3. Strengthen manufacturing on the East side of the Canal.

The M-zones on the east side of the Canal should be mapped as an "Industrial Employment District" to provide additional protections and certainty for manufacturing uses. Industrial Employment Districts, a potential new type of zoning, would require that non-industrial uses (such as hotels and large retail establishments) would have to obtain a special permit to be built.

4. Ensure that recreational boating does not interfere or disrupt industrial barging or maritime operations that currently take place on the Gowanus Canal and on its banks.

Business in the Gowanus currently move crushed quarry stone, sand, fuel oil, scrap metal, and cement on the Canal and Bay. By barging, these businesses remove the equivalent of 194,144 trucks from our roads each year. The Gowanus is one of only three industrial canals in all of New York City. If we are dedicated to reducing congestion on our roads and moving goods in an environmentally sustainable way, we should encourage more goods movement on the Canal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration of these matters.

## Appendix A

Some of the businesses that rent in Subarea B:

**Turning Star**, 229 Bond Street: NYC's only Manufacturer of fire retardant products. Moved to Gowanus in 2006 and has since invested \$220,000 in its space and equipment. Turning Star employs 7 people, all of whom are from Brooklyn.

**Fine Woodworking**, 460 Baltic Street: Manufactures one-of-a-kind pieces predominantly for the upscale residential market. Fine Woodworking has been in business for nearly 15 years, the last 7 of which have been in Gowanus. Fine Woodworking is one of cluster of woodworkers in Subarea B that share equipment, contacts and clients. This business has previously moved from Soho, Hells Kitchen, and Williamsburg as a result of rezonings and speculation. It would cost roughly \$50,000 to relocate.

**Solid Tops**, 458 Baltic Street, Manufactures kitchen cabinets, table and counter tops. Previously located on Hamilton Avenue, Solid Tops relocated to Baltic Street in early 2000. Today, the company employs 7 people.

**Eastern Effects**, 210 Douglas Street: A motion picture and supplies rental house, Eastern Effects employs 17 people. Although Eastern Effects rents its space, the owner has invested over \$100,000 to build out a mezzanine to accommodate its growing business.