

Contact: Anat Jacobson, Press Secretary
212-669-4743 or 646-321-4400
James Vlasto, Communication Director
212-669-4166 or 917-414-2915

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, January 18, 2005, 11:00 AM

**Mayor Gives West Side Royal Treatment, Greenpoint-Williamsburg Raw Deal
Gotbaum: Bloomberg Approach to Redevelopment Sets a Double Standard**

Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum called the Bloomberg Administration's plan for the redevelopment of Greenpoint-Williamsburg a raw deal, saying it cheats residents out of desirable green space and fails to deal with a looming transportation crisis and school overcrowding. Joining residents and local officials in the neighborhood today, Gotbaum noted that the administration has taken a far more lavish approach to Manhattan's West Side.

"In Manhattan, they're willing to spend billions on a boulevard park and an extension of the 7 train, all so they can have Midtown West," Gotbaum said. "In Brooklyn, they're nickel-and-dime residents over parks and refusing to overhaul a transportation system that's already bursting at the seams. The double standard couldn't be more blatant."

Gotbaum also indicated that, while the administration's plan for Greenpoint-Williamsburg calls for 21,000 units of new housing, it does not satisfy community demand for aggressive affordable housing development.

"Affordable housing must be the focus of every major redevelopment the City undertakes," Gotbaum said.

The administration plan includes no significant enhancement of the area's public transportation service, which is already at capacity. The only anticipated improvement to the L line is the widening of the stairwell at the Bedford Avenue station. The plan calls for private water taxi service but does not provide for public transportation to the waterfront.

"The Chairman of the MTA has said that he has higher priorities than a 7 extension for the West Side," Gotbaum said. "Relief for Greenpoint-Williamsburg should be one of those priorities, but Mayor Bloomberg and Deputy Mayor Doctoroff are putting their agenda above the needs of Brooklyn's waterfront residents."

According to Gotbaum, the administration has applied the same double standard to the allotment of green space. On the West Side, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have insisted on a massive boulevard park between 10th and 11th Avenues. In Greenpoint-

Williamsburg, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are calling for a paltry point-7 acres of green space per 1000 residents despite the fact that the City Planning Commission has set 2.5 acres per 1000 residents as a guideline for future development. On the West Side, the City is using public bonds to assure the creation of green space. In Greenpoint-Williamsburg, it is taking a piecemeal approach, relying on individual developers to act on its promises.

And where the Environmental Impact Statement for the West Side provides for new schools to accommodate the anticipated influx of residents, the EIS for Greenpoint-Williamsburg does nothing to alleviate the strain on neighborhood schools.

"The Mayor's message is loud and clear," Gotbaum said. "If you live in Brooklyn, your tax dollar buys you less park space and less relief from crowded subways and overcrowded classrooms."

"The Mayor's plans to rezone neighborhoods across the City will affect all New Yorkers for decades to come. Without a guarantee that some of these new homes will be affordable, New York's working class will be pushed even farther out of the neighborhoods that it helped build," said Council Member David Yassky, who represents the neighborhood.

Gotbaum called on the administration to listen to the concerns of the community and revamp its Greenpoint-Williamsburg plan. "Mayor Bloomberg was elected to represent all five boroughs," she said. "Anything less than equal consideration is unacceptable."

The Public Advocate for the City of New York

Betsy Gotbaum
Public Advocate