



**Morris Park Business Improvement District
966 Morris Park Avenue, Bronx, NY 10462**

New York City Planning Commission
Chair Dan Garodnick
120 Broadway, 3rd Floor New York, NY 10271

Dear Chair Garodnick,

The Morris Park Business Improvement District in the Bronx strongly supports the Department of City Planning's proposed "City of Yes for Economic Opportunity" zoning amendment aiming to modernize the city's zoning rules, to further support small business growth, to create thriving commercial corridors and bolster the City's economic recovery. As the current regulations can be particularly confusing for small businesses and innovative entrepreneurs trying expand in New York City, we consider that the proposed Economic Opportunity zoning text amendment will provide clear and sensible rules that allow businesses necessary operational flexibility.

Since 2019, the Morris Park BID has overseen the transformation of Morris Park Avenue into an energetic, vibrant and diverse commercial corridor serving a multi-ethnic community of over 45,000 residents. While our corridor performed exceptionally well under the pandemic conditions, forthcoming major infrastructure and transportation developments in neighboring areas call for a fresh look at zoning regulations with a view of enhancing the commercial and public spaces. Particularly, we anticipate this proposal to have a positive impact in relation to the MTA Penn Station Access project that will connect the East Bronx to Manhattan, as well as Westchester and Connecticut along the MNR New Haven Line. As Morris Park is one of the city's largest job centers particularly in the life-sciences space, with over 23,000 jobs within half a mile of the proposed Metro North station, we forecast significant small business development over the next couple of years in areas surrounding the stations. In conjunction with the ongoing rezoning process around the 4 new stations including Morris Park, we consider that the "City of Yes for Economic Opportunity" proposal will answer immediate needs and help re-shape and re-configure several commercial corridors surrounding Morris Park, that will benefit from and will be enhanced by the additional flexibility provided by the proposed provisions.

In Morris Park we have also focused on building a green commercial corridor through innovative streetscape and beautification improvements, including operating the largest horticultural program on a commercial corridor in the Bronx. While a lot remains to be done especially regarding updated utilities and water management infrastructure on Morris Park Avenue, our work will be significantly assisted by the clearer design regulations for commercial ground floors in the text amendment, fostering a more attractive retail experience.

The proposed Economic Opportunity zoning text amendment will also allow more businesses to locate near their customer base, support the growth of industries such as life sciences, and give businesses the predictability essential to planning. These proposals will help ensure that the Bronx, along with the entire City, will continue being at the forefront of urban sustainability, providing an environment competitive for investment and innovation in the years to come.

Sincerely,
Dr. Camelia Tepelus
Executive Director, Morris Park Business Improvement District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Camelia Tepelus".

October 16, 2023