



COUNCIL OF BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOODS, Inc.

Response Summary Report Atlantic Yards FEIS

February, 2007





<http://atlanticyardsreport.blogspot.com>



http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~scintech/brooklyn/hsd_historypage.html



Atlanticyards.com

Prepared by:
ntelligence Inc.
For the Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods, Inc. (CBN)
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Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods

Objectives:

- ENGAGE community groups, business groups and churches in Community Districts 2, 3, 6, and 8
- PROVIDE A NEUTRAL FORUM to discuss the Atlantic Yards Arena and Redevelopment Proposal and the associated review process
- Strive to ensure that the community is effectively engaged throughout the ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS, and that the community obtains the financial resources, access to information and technical assistance necessary to oversee and participate in the same



Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods

Activities

- Community Survey
- Response to Draft Scope of Analysis (October 2005)
- Community Consultant Team for Environmental Review:
 - Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates (PPSA)
 - Hunter College Center for Community Planning & Development (CCPD)
 - Pratt Institute Center for Community Development (PCCD)
- Community Reporting
- Formal Response to the DEIS for the Atlantic Yards
- Analysis and Reporting on the FEIS for the Atlantic Yards



CBN Overview & Assessment ⁽¹⁾

- FEIS is seriously flawed
 - Standards are inconsistent
 - e.g., Study area shrinks for some topics, grows for others;
 - Grand Army Plaza is included in Open Space but not in Traffic
 - Methodologies are inconsistently applied within and between tasks
 - Opinions are presented as facts
 - “Facts” are presented without the supporting documentation or references required by SEQRA



CBN Overview & Assessment ⁽²⁾

- FEIS is seriously flawed
 - Information promised in the Final Scope was not forthcoming in the DEIS nor the FEIS
 - Missing police and fire studies
 - Documentation requested by CBN's reviewing consultants was not completely supplied
 - 200 pages arrived 2 days before FEIS 2nd certification
 - Some documentation supplied was insufficient to support the facts presented
 - “Secret” Wind Study revealed adverse effects: FEIS says no adverse Wind effects



CBN Overview & Assessment ⁽³⁾

Underestimates severe cumulative effect for:

- Traffic and Transit
- Energy requirements
- Sewage treatment plant and pumping requirements
- Sanitation and landfill

Financial costs/benefits impossible to assess and verify

- Figures have never been released
- Open-ended infrastructure cost increases



Traffic & Transit

- The GPP incorrectly calls this a “Transit-Oriented Project”
 - ...with 3,800 parking spots?
 - No new solutions, just more riders and traffic
- Study area ignores other development
 - 10 million sf within 2 miles = BAY + 25%, or 4 Empire State Buildings
 - Ignores Traffic implications
- Alternatives not well analyzed
 - Even with No-Build area is in massive gridlock by 2013
 - **Gridlock in area by 2013 without Atlantic Yards**
 - **Gridlock by 2009 with Atlantic Yards**

Traffic & Transit

- FEIS fails to analyze major roadways
 - BQE? Gowanus Expressway?
 - FEIS consulted NY City DOT, which has no oversight of highways
- FEIS fails to justify choice of peak periods
 - Local studies say much longer peak periods
- FEIS underestimates transit demand
 - Projects 0.5% growth: actual growth 2003-2005...
 - 2.7% citywide
 - 16% at Atlantic Terminal!
- FEIS proposes unproven Mitigations

Traffic & Transit

- FEIS uses outdated CEQR guideline for subway ridership growth, ignores real growth rate
 - 0.5% projection vs. recent growth of several percentage points
 - B'klyn wide subway growth 1995-2005 up 47.4%, or...
 - 4.4% Annualized Growth, or...
 - NINE TIMES the EIS projections
- FEIS glosses over problems with platform crowding
 - Proposed mitigation not corroborated by MTA
- Inadequate bicycle plan, safety measures
 - FEIS provides no baseline for current cycling usage

Traffic & Transit

- Mitigation changes do not address DEIS comments
 - FEIS fails to take “hard look” at proposed mitigations
 - NO Congestion pricing NO area resident parking permits
- Proposed transit-fare incentives overstate potential
 - MetroCard Discounts = Fairy-tale mathematics
 - Hidden public subsidy, again
- Proposed HOV parking plan ignores “avoidance” issues
 - Proliferation of commercial parking lots
 - Makes exception for Skybox Users
- Proposed transit measures not a mitigation
 - Implies *major* public costs

Infrastructure

- Some good planning on water retention, but...
 - Ignores what happens when the pipes meet!
- Doesn't address the draw on the Power Grid at all
 - And there's a lot more development going on...
 - Remember Queens this summer???
- Can't support their findings with their data

Socioeconomic Conditions

- 2,929 current units of affordable housing at risk of indirect displacement from gentrification
 - Atlantic Yards deepens and accelerates problem
 - More units at risk than maximum 2,250 units proposed
- 2,000 units of affordable housing may never be built
 - Phase II of project only built if developer feels Phase I made “enough profit”
 - No pro-forma financial filing (MTA requirement violation) means no definition of “enough profit”
- All Socioeconomic benefits are dependent on Community Benefits Agreement
 - Private agreement between developer and very few organizations
 - NO government oversight or enforcement

Socioeconomic Conditions

Gentrification Accelerator

Income Breakdown of New AY Households vs.
Income Breakdown of Current Households

Income Band *	Current Households	AY
less than \$21,270	24%	0%
\$21,270 - \$28,360	10%	3%
\$29,069 - \$35,450	16%	10%
\$42,540 - \$70,900	23%	7%
\$71,609 - \$99,260	10%	7%
\$99,969 - \$113,440	6%	7%
more than \$113,440	11%	64%

* *Income bands for current households (based on Census categories) are slightly different than the bands in the AY housing program (based on percentages of Area Median Income).*

Community Facilities

- NO police study released
- NO call for increased fire department services
- NO terrorism study
 - “Not a reasonable worst case scenario...”
- FEIS says yes to a school, but no details and...
 - City has to buy the land from developer
 - City pays to construct the school
 - Yet another hidden subsidy

Open Space

- As proposed, the Atlantic Yards would further reduce already insufficient Open Space ratio
- Amount of proposed Open Space incorrectly calculated
 - Overstates Open Space Ratio by 300%
- Includes areas as Open Space that don't fit CEQRA
 - Urban Room?
 - Arena “Roof garden”
 - Mostly “passive” Open Space (contradicts NYC guidelines)

Open Space (2)

- Park space is problematic
 - Internalized within towers, not easily accessible
 - Will be mainly in shadow
 - Not designed for activity
 - Unrealistic Design elements
 - May not be built if problems with Phase II build out



Open Space ⁽³⁾

- Reduces amount of available Open Space

- NYC guidelines call for 1.5 acres /1000 residents
- Area currently offers .85 acres/1000 residents
- Proposal would reduce to 0.28 acres/1000 residents
- Almost all would be Passive Open Space

- Poor second to Battery Park City!

- BPC built Parks first
 - Inviting and accessible to public, not just residents
- Achieved NYC goals of 2.5 acres / 1000 residents

Open Space ⁽⁴⁾

- Deficient proposed mitigations
 - Park may not be built if there are problems with Phase II build out
 - Proposed park space not easily accessible to public
 - Park space proposed is primarily passive use (contradicts NYC guidelines)
 - Space proposed not truly Open Space
 - Urban Room is ticket office
 - Roof of the Arena only accessible to residents/employees

CBN Overview & Assessment ⁽⁵⁾

- FEIS has severe shortcomings and serves neither the Public, Government bodies, nor the Developer
- Supplements or a new EIS are necessary
- Atlantic Yards spotlights the need for comprehensive regional planning & infrastructure investment



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COUNCIL OF BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOODS

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Project for Public Spaces

Q&A

