



NEW YORK STATE SENATE

DANIEL SQUADRON
STATE SENATOR
25th District

TESTIMONY OF STATE SENATOR DANIEL SQUADRON TO THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED REZONING OF CARROLL GARDENS AND THE COLUMBIA WATERFRONT DISTRICT

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Daniel Squadron and I represent the 25th Senate District in the New York State Senate. My district includes the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Greenpoint, Williamsburg, Vinegar Hill, Fulton Ferry, Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens and Gowanus, and the Manhattan neighborhoods of Tribeca, Battery Park City, the Lower East Side, Chinatown, the Financial District, Little Italy, SoHo and the East Village.

As many of my neighbors in Carroll Gardens know, I do not just represent the neighborhood in the State Senate; I live there too. As a resident and a representative, I continue to support a comprehensive, contextual rezoning of the entire community, from the Gowanus Canal to the water. A rezoning is a vital component of a broader strategy to preserve the unique nature of the community while allowing responsible, contextual development.

Community members and community groups have long advocated for a rezoning, and I appreciate the willingness of the Department of City Planning to work collaboratively to incorporate their input into the rezoning proposal. We are at this stage in the rezoning in large part thanks to the advocacy of Carroll Gardens and Columbia Waterfront residents and organizations, who have dedicated time, expertise and labor to his endeavor. This proposal is the product of extensive conversation between the City and the community. That history of engagement is reflected in the quality of the proposal.

Much of the proposal serves the long-stated community goals of encouraging responsible growth and protecting the unique, historic character of the neighborhood. Fifty-foot height limits throughout much of the area will encourage contextual development and preserve the low-rise nature of the community. A thoughtful approach to the Columbia Waterfront will allow for future commercial and residential growth on a comparable scale with existing buildings, and the careful targeting of commercial overlays will help new commercial growth fit contextually with existing commercial uses, protecting the character of the neighborhood's side streets and many residential blocks.

I do have some concerns about the current proposal. Several residential corridors are proposed for R6-A zoning, which would allow for a maximum building height of seventy feet and a Floor

Area Ratio (FAR) of 3.0. R6-A is an appropriate zoning designation for certain wide commercial streets, but seems excessive for portions of Clinton and Henry, as the current plan proposes, as well as President Street and First Place. These streets are almost entirely residential and are largely defined by historic, low-density brownstones.

While I understand that DCP has chosen the R6-A designation because some existing buildings exceed the maximum area for an R6-B designation, I remain concerned that stretches of R6-A zoning on these streets could encourage irresponsible, non-contextual development that would conflict with long-held community goals and other components of this generally thoughtful rezoning plan. I ask that DCP re-examine these particular streets and reconsider its proposal to zone them R6-A.

A rezoning of Carroll Gardens and Columbia Waterfront is long overdue, and I am pleased that DCP has been so inclusive of community residents and organizations in the development of its plan. Planning the future development of Carroll Gardens and the Columbia Waterfront raises questions that cut to the core of the neighborhood's identity; such an important process should be undertaken with the input and participation of the entire community. I look forward to working with the Community Board, with the City and with many of my neighbors to push the plan forward and re-zone responsibly for the future of our community.