



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Senator Avella and Assemblymember Kim Praise Department of City Planning's Decision to Withdraw Flushing West Rezoning Proposal

ANDREI VASILESCU June 2, 2016

Queens, NY - Today, State Senator Tony Avella and Assemblymember Ron Kim praised the Department of City Planning's (DCP) decision to withdraw Flushing West rezoning plans. The lawmakers had criticized the plan, arguing that the proposed development overlooked several logistical issues, including over-congestion, a lack of accessible transportation and environmental impact.

Under the City administration's plans to rezone sections of New York City for affordable housing, DCP looked to Flushing West to create as many as 1,600 additional apartments. To incorporate these apartments, DCP's proposal included waiving parking requirements, arguing that parking space was not necessary because of neighboring 7-line access. As per the MTA's own figures, however, the 7-line's capacity is already nearly at capacity and the line has been known to experience massive delays.

Additionally, the development plans would exacerbate Flushing Creek pollution caused by overburdened sewage lines in the area which would only be further strained by additional development.

Senator Avella was the first elected official to call the plan reckless and was joined by Assemblymember Ron Kim in March of this year. They held a joint press conference at Flushing West to voice their concerns and called on the City to abandon the rezoning.

Today, it was revealed that the City had withdrawn plans for the Flushing West rezoning in response to City Council Member Pete Koo, who also voiced his opposition in a letter to the DCP echoing many of the same concerns. Koo also added his concern that flight paths from LaGuardia would need rerouting as a result of loosened height restrictions in the Flushing West rezoning plan and that federal intervention would be necessary.

“Competent City Planning starts a strong foundation prior to any development. It starts with infrastructure in place capable of accommodating new population increases. Flushing West rezoning, however, would have bypassed these prerequisites and ushered in reckless development. The new zoning would have eliminated parking requirements and pushed an additional town’s worth of people onto the dangerously over-crowded 7-line. Instead of first cleaning up the Flushing Creek pollution, the pollution would have been made worse by the additional strain on sewer lines. This was a poor plan from its inception and I applaud the Department of City Planning for withdrawing the rezoning proposal. There is a need for affordable housing - no one is arguing that. But the Mayor needs to understand that you don’t solve one problem by creating five more,” said State Senator Tony Avella.

"It is a relief to know that the City Department has withdrawn the Flushing West Rezoning Plan, something that Senator Avella and I have already publicly voiced our concerns with. Though our community has continued to experience unprecedented levels of growth in recent years, there has not been a similar increase in infrastructure or public sector investment. The demand for more housing, especially affordable housing, in our city is understandable, but it should be balanced by a clear plan to address the affected local communities’ issues with limited capacity. With over-congestion on the streets and a 7 train

at 98% capacity, on top of a rapidly growing population, it is clear that more development alone would only have exacerbated the situation," stated Assemblyman Ron Kim.