



June 2, 2008

Ms. Purnima Kapur
Director, Brooklyn City Planning
16 Court Street, 7th Fl.
Brooklyn, NY 11241-0103

Ms. Kapur,

I am writing on behalf of the Stable Brooklyn Community Group in response to the preliminary proposal for rezoning in our neighborhood.

First, we wish to thank you, Jen Posner, and others who have taken the time to listen and consider the wishes and ideas of the community with regard to the rezoning study. The work we did was careful, thoughtful, and considered; we appreciate that City Planning is giving it the same consideration.

Our group met over the weekend to discuss the latest proposal, namely that the area of 2 and 3-story homes would be rezoned to R5B, but the vacant lot and two apartment buildings now zoned R6 would be rezoned to R6A.

We were universally agreed that the R5B designation for the homes was exactly right and we fully support this part of the proposal. With regard to the R6A designation on Caton Avenue, we were also in universal agreement: we feel very strongly that if City Planning wishes to make it R6A (effectively identical in our case to the existing R6 designation) then our proposal for a C1-3 overlay on Caton Avenue should be implemented as well. We all feel that if the area is to be densely built, then the opportunity must be made available for a developer to build ground floor retail that would serve local needs.

Fifteen years has passed since a nursing home was first proposed for Caton Avenue. As we understand, according to Article 1, Chapter 1, Section 11-42 of the zoning resolution, the 1995 special permit to build the nursing home at an FAR of 4.8 with zero parking required is no longer valid and any similar proposal would be greeted with public outrage today. The neighborhood has changed markedly in these 15 years. Warehouses have been replaced by condos and a church, the Fort Hamilton F stop, formerly lightly used, is now crowded with commuters who call the area home. The diversity of the neighborhood is nearly as diverse as all of Brooklyn.

When the three proposed new buildings are all completed and the recently completed one is occupied, we anticipate a minimum of 298 new dwelling units—an increase of 56% from the current 532 to a possible 830 or more (representing approximately 1400 people). The 1500 member commuter church also adds significantly to the population, especially on weekends. This increase in population will only intensify the demands on local services, of which there are very few. Our community plan anticipated this demand by mapping a commercial strip on Caton

Avenue to encourage the sort of local retail space that can adapt and change as the neighborhood changes.

Long-term viable neighborhoods in other parts of Brooklyn all have a core of local shopping that can be adapted to local needs. These opportunities for small businesses are what make neighborhoods livable and enjoyable. They foster community, fuel the economy, and improve quality of life. Everyone living here now feels this lack; new residents will feel it as well and will, in turn, be compelled to own cars in order to perform everyday errands that people in better served neighborhoods do on foot.

Our group has always taken the long view with regard to our neighborhood. That's why we embarked on the community planning process in the first place. Individual interests are carefully weighed against what's best for the community, both present *and* future. This is a slow process, but it is thorough and can address aspects of planning that overtaxed city agencies often cannot. We view ourselves as a partner in the planning process. We trust that City Planning can therefore appreciate our perspective. While we understand that the overlay will not guarantee a commercial strip will be built, we do not see the wisdom in passing up this opportunity.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mandy Harris,
on behalf of Stable Brooklyn Community Group

cc: Jen Posner, Brooklyn City Planning
NYC Councilmember Bill de Blasio
Richard Bearak, Deputy Director, Planning & Development, Brooklyn Borough President
Randy Peers, Chair, Brooklyn Community Board 7
John Burns, Chair, Landmarks & Land Use, Community Board 7
Jeremy Laufer, District Manager, Brooklyn Community Board 7