



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Senator Avella and Assembly Member Ron Kim Stand Together To Oppose Flushing West Development

ANDREI VASILESCU March 11, 2016



(Flushing, NY) Today, State Senator Tony Avella and Assembly Member Ron Kim stood together at Flushing West where the Department of City Planning (DCP) is proposing to substantially rezone for development. Together, the legislators opposed the Flushing West Development and announced plans to introduce legislation requiring municipalities, when considering a rezoning proposal based on proximity to transportation hubs, to study and assess whether the mass transit option could accommodate additional ridership.

Chief among their concerns was the clear overcrowding of Flushing. The over-populated area already struggles to accommodate the needs of Flushing residents, particularly the MTA 7 line, which has been known to suffer from reoccurring service disruptions and congested trains.

Avella and Kim questioned how an already over-capacity transportation system could accommodate the population surge that would come with further development and announced details of their soon to be addressed legislation. Under their bill, municipalities served by the MTA would be required to conduct a study on the environmental impacts of a comprehensive rezoning plan to determine whether mass transit could accommodate the ridership increase.

Another point of contention was DCP's claim that the development proposes to increase the availability of affordable housing. Avella explained that the current method of assessing the Average Median Income (AMI) works against ensuring that low-income families will benefit from the development. By factoring in wealthier suburbs into the average, the AMI gives an inaccurate profile of a NYC family's income.

Because the mandatory affordable housing that will come with the development is scaled to AMI, Avella argued that the families most in need will not benefit from the proposal. Avella currently has a bill in Albany to redefine a more appropriate AMI calculation based on zip codes (S.6628).

Finally, Avella and Kim also called on the City to address the rampant pollution of Flushing Creek before any plans to develop Flushing continue.

"DCP is putting the horse ahead of the cart with its push to develop Flushing West. If we ask residents of Flushing to accept even more crowding, they should, at the very least, expect an

affordable housing solution; something that I strongly believe this proposal would not achieve. Not with the way the City currently calculates AMI. Also concerning is that Flushing is already indisputably over-populated. The streets are filled, the subways are over-capacity and yet DCP is advocating for greater density with few, if any, solutions for accommodating that population surge. Before the City haphazardly rezones Flushing West, or any other community for that matter, it should conduct a study to determine whether transportation systems could assimilate increased ridership. That is why I am proud to introduce legislation with Assembly Member Kim mandating the City to do exactly that, prior to any rezoning approval,” said State Senator Tony Avella.

“One size does not fit all when it comes zoning, especially congested neighborhoods like Flushing. It takes a more comprehensive approach, involving both local and state agencies putting together a plan that can truly serve a growing community. Senator Avella and I will be introducing new legislation that will require a full environmental and transportation assessment by the municipality responsible for any rezoning near transportation hubs. Simply stated, how can we even consider adding more people to the second most congested neighborhood in the city without any plans to improve the community’s infrastructure? The people of Flushing and Queens deserve better than this,” said Assembly Member Ron Kim.