



MBP Announces Comprehensive Plan for Garment Center

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New York's planning and zoning process is broken. The people and small businesses impacted by the City's zoning changes don't have an adequate opportunity to be heard and to shape their own environment.

Borough President Gale Brewer is to be applauded for bringing the Garment Center Steering Committee together to fix that broken process, and to ensure that those affected by proposed changes to New York's Garment Center have the data, the information and the opportunity to deliberate and envision a stronger fashion industry and vibrant, livable neighborhood.

Now City Hall must listen.

The report released today reflects a deep understanding of the issues and innovative strategies: These strategies will strengthen the fashion industry while allowing the neighborhood to also evolve to meet the Mayor's objectives to create more office space.

The report offers a solution to the most critical and complex issue – how to lift zoning restrictions that protected manufacturing but still provide space for the manufacturing. Manufacturing is necessary for all the other parts of the fashion eco-system to function efficiently. That solution is to help the industry take control of its space through ownership, long-term leases and a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide space for the apparel manufacturing.

There is no time for business as usual.

City Hall needs to climb out of the rut that zoning should be pushed through communities with deals cut only in the last weeks of a zoning change. It just can't work that way. The city needs to ensure that space is controlled by the industry before it lifts the protections, otherwise businesses, and jobs, and the fashion industry which has been one of the defining elements of the city for a century will be lost.

Thank you.

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NOTE: This testimony was prepared by the Pratt Center for Community Development. It does not necessarily reflect the official position of Pratt Institute.