



Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA)  
www.OANA-NY.org

Innovation Queens Position:

Aug 10, 2022

Introduction: Ever since 2010 OANA have been asking for a contextual rezoning of the area to the south of the 2010 Astoria rezoning, to no avail. There have been previous attempts to rezone and develop this neighborhood over the years, we kept asking for a contextual neighborhood rezoning, to no avail. We still have not got this large-scale area rezoning so we can have an effective context.

We must keep in mind that this development site, because of its location and accessibility to transit, is primed to be developed. This is the third attempt. This neighborhood will not remain static. We trust that with good faith negotiation by all parties, responsible development can be achieved.

Our primary issues or needs are:

1. Upon seeing the shadow study, we would like to see if the taller structures could be lowered and moved closer to Northern Blvd. The shadows cast will affect the quality of life, particularly for the 2-3 store residential buildings north of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue. So please readdress this. We also need to factor in how much open space may be lost. We have to decide whether we are creating open space for people or birds:
2. We also feel that the most effective way of keeping housing costs down is supply and demand, which means we need to make sure the supply of housing exceeds demand. (as happened during the pandemic when rents fell 35%). This means we should not be afraid to build: Even market rate apartments. When you keep eliminating development, and demand exceeds supply, you end up with areas like Sutton Place and the West Village: Only for the very rich.
4. In today's society, affordability is an urgent issue. NYC has sustained itself historically by attracting the most innovative, ambitious people from all over the USA and the World, regardless of socio-economic status. We must make sure there are no economic barriers to these new residents.



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Also, there are few existing residents on site that would be displaced. And this is private land, that makes gaining funding to build the 100% affordable some have called for almost impossible.

However, we must make sure that no one has to move from the general neighborhood because of any cost increases caused by this development. So lets' come up with a number that offers neighborhood stability, and an acceptable return on investment so funding can be secured.

Therefore, we call upon all parties involved to negotiate in good faith to increase the affordability of this project, so all Astorian's can benefit.

5. While the issues of current residents must be addressed, today the Steinway St Business District, especially in that area, is extremely depressed. There is no better way to revitalize the local small business environment than to bring in more local residents. The current population cannot support the businesses.

6. We want a commitment for sustainability, especially on-site green power generation (Perhaps Geo-thermal, solar), and treatment of sewage. Also, as was done years ago at Citicorp Center, they must improve the subway station.

7. We would be interested in seeing if they consider eliminating automobiles, except for the disabled and delivery vehicles, from all streets, creating a car free zone. They can create private trolleys and small buses for movement around the development. This might make the development truly Innovative! This would also make good use of the 1390 parking spots, allowing people to park, and then use the car free zone. Also, by eliminating cross streets to vehicles, you can create more open space. You can also utilize pedestrian and bicycles bridges over these closed streets, allowing for delivery services and service vehicle access.

Regards



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