



## **NYC City Council**

### **Land Use Committee Hearing on Industrial Land Use and Zoning Policy - Challenges and Opportunities**

#### **Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams**

**Wednesday, May 6, 2015**

As the innovation economy grows globally and locally, we need to determine how to best nurture and enhance this manufacturing-based economy. To drive growth, there are five factors to consider as we look to redevelop the areas where this economy thrives: The industrial land uses.

First, we must better prepare the local workforce. To truly benefit the people of Brooklyn and New York City, it's imperative that we prepare them to participate in this new economy. This will require increasing STEAM education (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) in public schools, renewing a focus on trade schools, and working with the private sector to establish local job centers that offer training and job placement. Given that these jobs pay 30% to 50% more than their service-sector counterparts and offer greater wage mobility, this could make the difference between a maker bubble and a maker movement.

Secondly, if industry and local communities don't rise together, neither will truly rise at all. This means we need to create an environment hospitable to workers with limited retail space, as well as allocate space to academic institutions that can benefit from proximity to an innovative industrial sector, and will in turn benefit local communities. The face of manufacturing has changed radically, so there is no reason why zoning for manufacturing cannot also adapt in a manner that is safe and responsible.

Thirdly, we must recognize that for many emerging companies, the greatest barrier to economic development and job creation is reliable and affordable Web connectivity. The infrastructure is wholly inadequate or simply does not exist in many of the waterfront communities we are targeting to grow, as well as similarly primed inland neighborhoods, like Brownsville and East New York. Our city's broadband and Wi-Fi providers, both big and small, need to expedite plans to bring all of our communities up to speed.

Furthermore, the success of these communities depends on affordable and worker housing near (but not in) these industrial zones. Our communities around industrial zones have long been working-class neighborhoods. We need to grow our options for affordable and worker housing in

these areas, so current residents can stay and people moving in for jobs can find a place to live that is within budget.

Finally, more must be done to connect the workforce to these manufacturing zones. Better access to transportation—Select Bus Service, ferry service, full-build Bus Rapid Transit, as well as safer ways to bike and walk to work—is needed to ensure that workers at these new manufacturing businesses can commute affordably, safely and quickly.

Once left for dead, our industrial areas are being resuscitated by the private and public sectors. Mayor Bill de Blasio has pledged a combined \$240 million to renovate once uninhabitable parts of the city-owned Brooklyn Navy Yard and Brooklyn Army Terminal, while private developers have also begun to respond to the demands of modern-day manufacturing with \$100 million to rehabilitate the 16-building, six-million-square-foot Industry City in Sunset Park.

These communities comprise public and local interests, as well as private ones. To succeed, each has to view the other as a partner in creating opportunity and enriching the community we all share. Now more than ever, as cultural and economic forces converge, we must work together to create the best possible economic conditions for the people of Brooklyn and the city. Together, we can diversify and strengthen our economy while lifting up our working-class population to meet the demands of the new innovation economy.