

Press Release - **B.U.I.L.D. (Brooklyn United for Innovative Local Development)**
2/8/2004

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Brooklyn United for Innovative Local Development (BUILD) is an ever growing coalition of long-time Brooklynites who have a vested interest in the responsible and equitable development of our community. We support the economic benefits of the Atlantic Yards Development Project for the existing community. The Atlantic Yards Development Project encompasses an arena for the newly acquired Nets Professional Basketball team, Class A commercial space and approximately 4,500 housing units. BUILD is undertaking a transparent (open and democratic) process to generate a Community Benefit Agreement. BUILD is seeking to invite more stakeholders who are willing to actualize the promise of this project.

Forest City Ratner, the development company for the project, has committed to negotiating a Community Benefits Agreement with BUILD to ensure that existing Brooklyn community residents profit from the business, jobs and housing opportunities engendered in the Atlantic Yards Development Project. In addition, BUILD endeavors to safeguard the best interests of Brooklyn residents in the planning and implementation of this project. BUILD will negotiate dynamic education, child care, youth development and senior citizen initiatives as well as community participation in business, job and housing opportunities into the Community Benefit Agreement.

In close proximity to the proposed site of the project, there exist communities that have traditionally been left behind and have not benefited from the development occurring in downtown Brooklyn. There is a 78% unemployment rate in the Fort Greene housing project and a 66% unemployment rate within the Farragut housing project. Moreover businesses within the vicinity of the proposed project site are undercapitalized. This long-term structural/economic crises must be addressed. Forest City Ratner's commitment to honoring a negotiated Community Benefits Agreement with BUILD makes the Atlantic Yards Development Project a welcome and long needed solution to the depressed socio-economic conditions that plague many communities immediately surrounding the target project site including Prospect Heights, Crown Heights, Weeksville, Bedford Stuyvesant and Fort Greene.

Moreover, by bringing and housing a professional sports team to the community, the Atlantic Yards Development Project introduces an incalculable resource building on the existing cultural assets including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Brooklyn Museum, Prospect Park, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, the Jewish Children's Museum, the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens and the Central Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. Consequently, the arena brings a world class sports and athletic presence to an existing rich cultural community.

BUILD will host a series of Town Hall and committee meetings to facilitate an open and democratic process to generate the Community Benefits Agreement. We invite additional community residents and stakeholders to participate in this process. Current supporters include:

77TH Police Precinct Community & Youth Council
88TH Police Precinct Community & Youth Council
Partnership for Youth & Community Empowerment (PYCE)
Fort Greene Empowerment Organization
Fort Greene Community Action Network
Developing Innovative and Viable Associations
Washington Avenue Merchants Associations
Faith Based Organizations
Kan Cobra
Malchijah Kilkenny Foundation
Operation Second Chance
People for Political and Economic Empowerment
Brooklyn House Recording Studio
Malchijah Hats
32 BJ
Carpenters Union
Electrical Union
T.R.A.D.E.S
High School & College Sports Groups
Raymond Saylor CPA
Block Association (Crow Hill, Prospect Place, Walt Whitman, Farragat, 407 Lincoln Place, Hanson Place, GranDean and Union Street)
Vanderbuilt Merchants Association
Po'k Knockers
The Usual
Mc Donald's (Vanderbuilt Avenue)