



OFFICE OF THE BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT

THE BRONX COUNTY BUILDING

851 GRAND CONCOURSE

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To Whom it May Concern:

Since early this year a Kingsbridge Armory Task Force, appointed by Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., has been meeting to discuss the future of this historic structure. Roughly one year ago, The City's original proposal to construct a retail mall at the Kingsbridge Armory was defeated by the City Council because of a number of issues, such as traffic, environmental impact and the lack of a living wage provision for future employees at the site. However, support for living wages was not required to join the task force. In fact, several members of the Kingsbridge Armory Task Force were publicly supportive of the retail mall proposal and are currently opposed to the living wage proposal that Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., the founder of this task force, has currently placed before the City Council.

At this point, the task force has concluded that efforts to redevelop the Kingsbridge Armory will focus on strategic reuse of the property for a combination of community revitalization, education, and economic development purposes. Our objectives will be to attract more skilled workers and higher paying jobs to the Bronx, to provide community space that will improve the quality of life of those in the surrounding area, to build on the strengths of the borough's universities, cultural and medical institutions, and, hopefully, to include programs that will prepare neighborhood residents for jobs in the technology and professional service sectors.

There has already been considerable interest from many parties in this regard. Our task force has heard from those looking to bring many different options to the Kingsbridge Armory, including space for recreation, cultural programming, arena and event space, and educational uses. In fact, many of these innovative ideas could work together, given the massive size of the armory and the reasonable demands of each project. We expect that given the poor shape of the building and its three levels of landmark protection, the redevelopment of the Kingsbridge Armory will likely require multiple components, as well as considerable public investment, in order to be successful.

To support this effort, the office of Borough President Diaz submitted the project for a special planning award from New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. Last week, NYU announced that the project was a winner in a highly competitive contest. Under NYU's Capstone Program, a team of faculty and students from the university will identify alternative uses for the armory through a year-long planning study that will advise the Kingsbridge Armory Task Force. The project will include research, design, and analysis of a sustainable and socially-beneficial model for the reuse of the Kingsbridge Armory. In recent years this program has helped identify uses and funding opportunities for many worthy causes, including a number of City agencies, and we are

confident that the report developed through the Capstone Program will present a strong foundation upon which to build a new RFP for the Kingsbridge Armory.

In order to foster the continued positive growth of the Bronx, we must make sure that development is handled in a responsible way, one that incorporates both the needs of the developers as well as the community-at-large. At the Kingsbridge Armory we are moving in the right direction, towards the creation of a new facility that will have the potential to reinvigorate not just the surrounding neighborhood but the entire Bronx.

Sincerely,

The Kingsbridge Armory Task Force

Consisting of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., City Council Member Fernando Cabrera, Majora Carter, Environmental Consultant; Marlene Cintron, President of the Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation; Paul Foster, chairman of Bronx Community Board #7; Jack Kittle, Political Director of District Council 9; Steven McInnis, Political Director for the New York City District Council of Carpenters; Desiree Pilgrim-Hunter, a board member of the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition; Ned Regan, former state comptroller; Jack Rosen, Chief Executive of Rosen Partners LLC; Steven M. Safyer, MD, President and CEO of Montefiore Medical Center, and Kathryn Wylde, President & CEO of the Partnership for New York City.