

## **Develop— don't destroy.**

BROOKLYN

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### **Points presented by 'Develop Don't Destroy (Brooklyn) Inc.' in meeting with the International Olympic Committee, regarding Proposed gymnastics venue for the NYC2012 Bid.**

#### **LEGAL**

**Claim:** *The State of New York and Forest City Ratner, (the proposed developer), own the land site for gymnastics arena.*

**Fact:** The site for the gymnastics arena lies partially on privately held land. Several property owners have no intention of selling their land, and have hired eminent civil rights lawyer Norman Siegel to go to court. On February 22, 2005, the highest court in the United States heard a case on the issue of eminent domain abuse. The ruling, due out this summer, may prevent the State of New York from taking control of the land.

#### **TROJAN HORSE**

The Olympic bid is being used as a means to grab 24 acres of prime real estate in Brooklyn, 60% of which is privately owned. Under the guise of the Olympics, a development that is 1.5 times the size of the World Trade Center has been proposed. The arena comprises only 11% of the proposed development. The remaining development will be mostly expensive rental units owned by favored developers.

#### **CONSULTATION AND REVIEW PROCESS**

##### **Bid Book:**

*"The city's formal review procedure for land use and environmental protection, including comprehensive public hearings and analysis, is already underway... For each site, extensive dialogue has been conducted and continues with community leaders and local elected officials."<sup>1</sup>*

**Fact:** The host city's formal review procedure for land use and environmental protection is being BYPASSED for the gymnastics venue. Our local elected city officials, who are strongly opposed to the proposed arena, will get no say. The matter will not be brought to our 51 elected host city council members for vote, even though the project will be heavily subsidized by the city, who will be left holding the bill.

#### **CONFLICT OF IOC CHARTER AND NY LAW**

New York law caps Olympic liability at \$250 million. The Olympic Charter requires the host city to assume complete financial responsibility. This critical issue has taken back stage while the focus has been on the real estate deals in Brooklyn and the West Side.

#### **BID PRECEDENT**

NYC2012 wants this \$600 million arena (and the \$2 billion Jets stadium) to be approved before the IOC vote. Platforms would have to be constructed over railyards for both these venues and paid for by the taxpayers. This would send the message to future bid cities

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.nyc2012.com/questionnaire\\_eng.pdf](http://www.nyc2012.com/questionnaire_eng.pdf)

that they must spend billions at the last minute to win. This violates the IOC's policy on containing cost and complexity, and would indicate that the Olympics is an exclusive club for rich cities, never to reach South America, Africa, India or other areas that have never hosted a Games.

### **INCONGRUITIES BETWEEN BID BOOK AND DEVELOPER'S PLAN**

Where the bid book shows a media center, the developer's plan shows massive amounts of housing and has no media center. Also, where the bid book shows a designated traffic lane for athletes, the developer's plan show a cluster of high-rises. When asked to explain the discrepancy, the developer said, "Our proposal is remaining the same. That's the city's bid book, and Forest City was not consulted and did not contribute to the information inside<sup>2</sup>"

### **ORGANIZED OPPOSITION – PROTESTS IN 2012**

**Bid Book:** *"NYC2012 has encountered no organized opposition to bringing the 2012 Olympic Games to New York<sup>1</sup>."*

**Fact:** A broad coalition of community-based organizations has come together in Brooklyn to oppose the arena project. Tens of thousands of residents have signed a petition because:

1. The proposed 'footprint' will ERASE one of the most ETHNICALLY DIVERSE and integrated neighborhoods in the city;
2. The development would be GROSSLY out of scale in the surrounding quiet, family-friendly, historic, residential neighborhoods;
3. The developer is using the arm of the State to bypass all community input and self-determination.

In 2012, many of the out-of-scale high-rises will not have yet been built, in order to accommodate the proposed media center.

In 2012 the residents of the five surrounding neighborhoods will be out in the thousands to protest to ensure that the remaining high-rises do not get built where the media center will be sited.

During the Olympics there will still be much continued anger in the Brooklyn community. The community will be out in the thousands protesting the way in which the Olympics have been co-opted by our government to force secretly negotiated, backroom deals for inappropriate development on our neighborhoods, in order to benefit a selected wealthy developer at the cost of the people of Brooklyn.

### **CONCLUSION**

We urge the 2012 bid committee and the IOC to work with the people and revise the bid to consider alternative venues for the gymnastics event, such as the Nassau Coliseum, the Continental Airlines Arena, Madison Square Garden or the proposed Newark Arena.

**Attachments:** List of Achievements for Develop Don't Destroy – (Brooklyn) Inc. – <http://dddb.net/achievements.php>

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<sup>2</sup> The Brooklyn Rail, "The Atlantic Yards Project: No Longer "Inevitable"?" February, 2005.  
<http://www.thebrooklynrail.org/local/feb05/atlanticyards.html>