

# Develop – don't destroy.

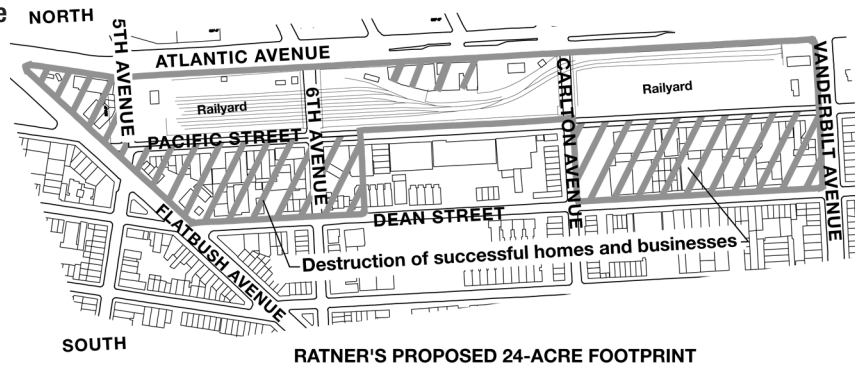
BROOKLYN

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Bruce Ratner's project for Prospect Heights, in the heart of historic Brownstone Brooklyn envisions a footprint 24 acres—1.5 times that of the World Trade Center site—and includes a 19,000-seat arena, 17 tower buildings ranging from 210 to 610 ft., 2.1 million sq. ft. of office space (equal to that in the Empire State Building), and 4.5 million sq. ft. of (mostly rental) housing. Development and job creation are to be encouraged, to be sure, but not on these terms. Here is a short list of what is wrong with the proposal.

## Halliburton Syndrome: Secret Backroom Deal

The biggest development project ever proposed for Brooklyn was negotiated behind closed doors between the developer, the government and the MTA. It was then presented to the people living there and in the surrounding neighborhoods as a done deal.



## Halliburton Syndrome: Tax-payer Dollars Diverted to a Private Development\*

The cost of the project to city and state taxpayers is estimated to be a LOSS of at least \$506 million. In the prime location selected, developers should be paying the taxpayers for the right to develop, not the other way around.

## Halliburton Syndrome: No-bid "Award"

Ratner will be gifted MTA/LIRR land that should be the subject of an open bidding process. The MTA has promised an independent appraisal of the land, but that number will likely be low-balled. The MTA has budget gaps of: \$540m for 2005, \$1.2m for 2006, and \$1.3m for 2007, and \$10b in debt.

## Evading the Public Process

In the 1960s, many neighborhoods rebelled against official top-down urban renewal plans that wiped out whole blocks and displaced thousands. ULURP was set up in the mid-1970s to allow neighborhoods to review and vote on most major land use changes, including urban renewal plans, zoning changes, and the acquisition and sale of city-owned land. In the past two years Mayor Bloomberg and Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff are reviving the Robert Moses era by pushing through the West Side Stadium and the Ratner Arena Highrise Plan using the arm of the State to bypass the process that was set up for public debate, discussion and decision making.

## Eminent Domain Abuse

13 acres of the 24-acre site would be acquired through the threat of eminent domain or the use of eminent domain, whereby private property will be condemned, seized and transferred by the government to a private developer. Those who want to keep their homes or businesses and fight the project are told that if they do not sell, they will be condemned. Homeowners and property owners are terrified. By using only hearsay and rumor in the press, Ratner has been able to buy some properties even before the project has been officially announced! This points to how much power this one man, with many political connections, has over home, business and property owners who have such little faith in the government to protect their 5th Amendment rights. This use of condemnation through eminent domain, taking private property and giving it to a private entity, is abusive, unconstitutional and has nothing to do with the original intention of the law. By June, 2005, the US Supreme Court will decide if this use of eminent domain is Constitutional. (More information on this case can be found here: [www.nolandgrab.org/archives/2004/12/dddb\\_press\\_rele\\_1.html](http://www.nolandgrab.org/archives/2004/12/dddb_press_rele_1.html))

## Long Term Community Residents

The footprint is occupied mostly by tenant residents, many of who have been living there for 30, 40, 50 – 60 years in rent stabilized apartments. Several of their buildings have been sold to Ratner, and these people, many of who speak no English, have received no communication from Ratner regarding their fate. They will eventually be ripped out of their homes and communities where they have lived all their lives and will be hard pressed to find affordable housing elsewhere. One disabled couple in their eighties have already suffered tremendous emotional trauma over the past few months even before the project has been officially announced.

## Constitutional Rights – Being Forced to Choose

Ratner has imposed lifetime gag orders on those who sold their property to him. They cannot associate with or donate money to groups founded to oppose the project. At Ratner's bidding they have to speak to the Press and at Public Hearings from a script he gives them. They have to take down all signs and banners of opposition and pressurize and give weekly reports on the holdouts who refuse to sell. These people, some of whom were working with 'Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn', have essentially been forced to choose between their first and fifth Amendment rights. Visit [www.dddb.net/public/gag](http://www.dddb.net/public/gag) for more information.

## Diversity and Affordable Housing

People from 26 ethnicities currently occupy the footprint. A study commissioned by Ratner predicts that the 4500 new rental units would be primarily geared toward wealthy residents new to New York, with triple the median income of current area residents. Pratt Area Community Council (PACC), a community development corporation concerned primarily with the preservation and development of low and moderate income housing in Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and Bedford Stuyvesant has stated that without vetting the project through the ULURP process: "The full range of potential harms include: a decreased availability of affordable housing, increased displacement of low and moderate income residents, and decreased racial, economic, and cultural diversity in contiguous neighborhoods –all resulting from the effect of these Plans in intensifying market forces" [www.dddb.net/public/paccposition.pdf](http://www.dddb.net/public/paccposition.pdf)

## Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

Ratner claims the project will bring in 10,000 permanent jobs. In the most optimistic scenario, the cost of each job created will be around \$45,000 to the taxpayer, which is 28% higher than the federal limit on cost per job created for projects receiving economic development funds. Furthermore, most of these jobs will go to white-collar office workers. The jobs created are calculated by counting the square footage of commercial space to be created and dividing this by 150 square feet (the area of an office cubicle). In other words, "jobs" means we'll build space to house 10,000 office workers in a city with a glut of office space.

## Mall-ification

Big mall franchise stores will be brought in to replace the mom-n-pop Brooklyn businesses.

## Refusal to Consider Alternatives

It is the job of the city planners to decide where a stadium should be built, not a private developer. It should be the right of the communities to determine how their neighborhoods are transformed – not a private developer. The community has come up with an alternate plan for the site. The Atlantic Yards Development Workshop plan can be found here: [www.dddb.net/public/AYDWS.pdf](http://www.dddb.net/public/AYDWS.pdf)


This plan calls for:

- Developing the rail-yards alone; not touching the adjacent land, which has been developing organically over the decades.
- Pizza and Eggs: Dividing up the taxpayer-owned 11 acre rail-yard plot into 11 slices and selling them to the highest bidder, rather than putting all our eggs in one basket.
- Creating affordable housing that will be owned by individuals rather than rented out by millionaires.
- Scale of development will be in keeping with that in Brooklyn – from 8 to 12 stories, rather than from 23 to 60 stories.
- Allow for up to 70% of the housing envisioned in Ratner's Plan.
- Allow for more retail space than envisioned in Ratner's Plan. This retail space will be owned by local Brooklyn business owners rather than big-box franchises.
- Create additional streets that will knit the neighborhoods and Fort Greene together, rather than demapping streets and creating a wall of highrises to divide up the neighborhoods.
- Put the project through the ULURP process to allow for public input and debate.

**Brooklyn's future should be determined by the people who live here,  
not by 200 millionaires who each contributed a minimum of \$1 million into Bruce Ratner's investment scheme.  
What you can do? Visit [www.developdontdestroy.org](http://www.developdontdestroy.org) for information, or call us at 718-362-4784.**

# SUPERSIZE BROOKLYN?

Check Out Bruce Ratner's Huge 17 High-Rise and Nets Arena Project Model



**FUHGEDDABOUDIT!**  
With Your Help, We Can Beat This Monster! Go To [DevelopDontDestroy.org](http://DevelopDontDestroy.org) and Join The Fight.

**Get involved.  
Volunteer.  
Donate.  
Together, we will defeat  
this taxpayer-subsidized  
sweetheart deal.**

\*Data from the June 1, 2004 study "Estimated Impact of Forest City Ratner's Brooklyn Arena and 17 High Rise Development on NYC and NYS Treasuries" by Jung Kim and Gustav Peebles ([www.dddb.net/public/EconReport.pdf](http://www.dddb.net/public/EconReport.pdf)).