

FACT SHEET: The Atlantic Terminal Plan

1. WHAT IS THE ATLANTIC TERMINAL PLAN?

The Atlantic Terminal Plan is a plan by the city and several real estate developers to build office buildings, movie theatres, middle- to upper-income housing (condominiums) and parking lots in the area around the intersection of 4th Ave., Flatbush Ave. and Atlantic Aves.

2. THERE'S A LOT OF VACANT LAND IN THIS AREA. WHY IS THAT?

Over 20 years ago the city tore down buildings--including a lot of housing--that was on this land. It was established as an "Urban Renewal Area" where new buildings were supposed to go up. As the buildings were torn down there were promises made and even a written document which said that low-income and moderate-income housing must be built in this area. But for 20 years nothing has happened.

3. WHO ARE THESE DEVELOPERS AND HOW WERE THEY CHOSEN?

The major developer is Rose Associates, a large real-estate development company based in Manhattan. They were chosen by the city without any discussion with the local Community Board which is supposed to oversee how developments like this take place, not to mention other community-based groups like churches, tenant associations, neighborhood associations, etc. According to The Phoenix, March 21, 1985, "Chairman Jerry Renzini of Community Board Two, in whose district the Atlantic Terminal project will be built, sent a letter to the Mayor complaining that his local Community District Board had been excluded from the developer selection process and had not even been invited to the January press conference" (where it was announced that Rose Associates had been chosen).

There are also other developers for much smaller parts of this overall project. One is the Times Plaza Development Corp., which plans 70-75 apartments that would rent for an average of \$750 a month for a two bedroom apartment (Phoenix, early 1985). The other is Calvin Johnson, who is planning to "develop high rise luxury housing on the empty parking lot between Atlantic Ave. and Pacific St." (Phoenix, July 25, 1985). However, Borough President Howard Golden is trying to get them removed.

4. WHAT IS PLANNED SPECIFICALLY BY ROSE ASSOCIATES?

A \$500 million development in two phases, it would include 1.8 million square feet of office space, 190,000 sq. ft. of general retail space, a 50,000 sq. ft. supermarket, a 26,000 sq. ft. health club, a 56,000 sq. ft. multi-screen cinema and 700-750 units of housing. The housing will be condominiums and will cost a minimum of \$50,000 to \$100,000 apiece, with the likelihood that the costs will go higher. No low-income housing will be built and very little, if any, moderate-income housing.

There will also be two parks and parking space for from 1,000 to 1,800 cars.

5. WHERE IS THE MONEY COMING FROM FOR ALL OF THIS DEVELOPMENT?

The City government is contributing a lot towards it. According to the N.Y. Times of August 11, 1985, here is how this "welfare for the rich" will be allocated: tax benefits which will provide 22 years of property tax exemption; a 30% reduction in energy costs and a 20% reduction in natural gas costs for eight years, declining thereafter to zero by the 13th year (these reductions will obviously be subsidized by taxpayer's money given to Rose Associates); \$13 million will be invested in "infrastructure improvements"; and \$5 million in a grant from "surplus" Municipal Assistance Corp. funds (taxpayer money). \$8.3 million from the federal government is expected. The rest is to be raised by Rose from bank loans, loans from insurance companies and municipal bond financing.

6. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS THAT PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY HAVE WITH THESE PLANS?

Housing: The Atlantic Terminal area is an Urban Renewal Area. When the buildings were torn down 20 years ago it was put into writing in a city document that low and moderate income housing must be built on this site. Yet Rose Associates' plan has virtually none; most certainly no low-income housing and very little moderate income. This in spite of a major housing crisis in Brooklyn and the city.

Traffic/pollution: The condominiums, parking lots, movie theatres and stores, as well as thousands of new jobs projected for this project, will attract many more cars to an area already congested by traffic and heavily polluted.

Displacement: The downtown Brooklyn neighborhoods have already experienced severe dislocation and suffering because of the displacement caused by the movement of professionals and upper-income people into these brownstone communities. The white-collar jobs and the condominium housing at Atlantic Terminal will only quicken the pace of that displacement process, disrupting ever-widening circles of neighborhoods throughout all of Brooklyn.

Jobs: Keith Getter, project manager of the Park Slope/Fifth Avenue Local Development Corp., has called for local people to be given the first crack at jobs, both during construction and after the project's completion. As quoted in the April 4-17 Prospect Press, "Getter said spillover will 'shore up' northern Fifth Avenue's undeveloped commercial and housing stock, but he fears the likelihood of jobs within this area--estimated at 7,000--going to suburbanites because of the proximity of the Long Island Rail Road terminal. 'It's very strong and positive', he said of the plan. 'But as I see it, it's set up for commuters.'"

Other concerns: Local small businesses and some homeowners are concerned, first, because some of them--especially those between Fulton St. and Atlantic Ave. on Flatbush, and those behind the Brooklyn Academy of Music--face physical removal from their homes or businesses as the plan is now structured. Others are concerned by the business that will be drawn away from their stores and towards the stores that will eventually be housed on the Atlantic Terminal.

Concern has also been raised about the plan for a 10-movie theatre complex and the possibility that it could become like Times Square with its porno movies and all that comes with that.

7. WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THIS PLAN?

There are a growing number of groups and individuals who have been concerned about this plan and have been speaking up about it, including members of the Community Board, churches, elected officials and tenant/housing groups. A coalition is in the process of forming to work to change it. The Downtown Brooklyn Tenants Federation is one of those groups. You need to get involved with us!

You should be on the lookout for a public announcement about public hearings on this plan, due to be happening sometime in October or November. We need as many people as possible to come out and let your concerns be heard! With dedicated and consistent organizing, we can have an impact!

This fact sheet has been produced by the Downtown Brooklyn Tenants Federation, Box 610, Times Plaza Station, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217, 643-9603.