

Amazon Talking Points

02/07/2019

1. We are opposed to giving Amazon \$3 billion in subsidies through a closed-door process, which totally bypassed New York's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP,) the law requiring public hearings and signoff by the Community Board, City Planning Commission, Borough President and City Council.
2. The Mayor and Governor claimed that Long Island City is a blighted slum and is covered by a 1968 law, the Urban Development Corporation Act, which was passed as a way to build affordable housing over the objections of recalcitrant communities, and was later revamped to spur economic development. This enabled Cuomo and de Blasio to bypass all oversight and review. Today, Long Island City is one of the fastest gentrifying parts of New York City.
3. The Amazon deal failed to take into account the true cost to the City of supplying such infrastructure as transportation or sewage for 25,000 workers. Neither did it consider the impact on housing costs.

In Seattle, where Amazon employees 40,000 people, rents have risen 40% in the past five years, contributing to a large rise in homelessness. An attempt by the city of Seattle to tax Amazon to pay for homeless housing was defeated by the company.

4. The State claims that the \$3 billion investment in the Amazon project will result in \$27.5 billion in new tax revenue, about evenly divided between the City and the State. The State cooked the books, however, by basing its estimate on Amazon's hiring 40,000 people, when actually the company is only committed to hiring 25,000. The City has not made its study public. Amazon's own estimate is \$10 billion in new tax revenue over 20 years.
5. The State's study failed to consider alternatives, and assumed that there would be no development on the site for the next 25 years. But, we know that two real estate companies had publicized plans to acquire the site and build 6,000 units of housing, 1,500 of which would have been affordable. Surely, such a development would also generate construction jobs, bring in property tax revenue and create customers for surrounding shops and businesses.

In addition, over the last eight years, Queens gained 112,000 jobs. Even if the City did nothing and Amazon did not come here, it is quite likely that in the next twenty-five years, the length of the Amazon rollout, another 25,000 jobs will be added in the borough anyway.

6. "But the reason they came here was not the tax breaks they got, which I didn't think they needed," former Mayor Bloomberg said last week.