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Councilmember Alan J. Gerson
51 Chambers St. (Suite 429)
New York, New York 10007

To Councilmember Alan Gerson:

The M'Finda Kalunga Community Garden is in complete agreement with the Bowery Association of Neighbor (BAN) proposal to preserve and protect the Bowery. As a stakeholder in the neighborhood for over a quarter of a century we would like to attend any meeting your office holds regarding the Bowery community.

BOWERY ALLIANCE OF NEIGHBORS - BOWERY REZONING PRINCIPLES

1. Preserve the character of the Bowery by creating a Bowery Special District.

The Bowery has a rich, diverse, unique history and has always had an important role in the City of New York. Its history should be respected and preserved. The Bowery is a convergence of low-rise, low-density communities that are protected by zoning to preserve context. The City has recognized the historic significance of the Bowery by protecting the west side of the Bowery in the Special Little Italy District and the NoHo Historic District. The East Village/ Lower East Side Rezoning Plan will now protect the area just east of the Bowery. However, the east side of the Bowery itself has been left out of all these rezonings.

The east side of the Bowery should be rezoned to ensure that it is in context to the rest of the community -- the Special Little Italy District, the NoHo Historic District, and East Village/Lower East Side. If the Bowery is not rezoned, the result will be a wall of out-of-scale, luxury development that will negatively impact these districts and undermine the goals of contextual zoning in the area.

2. Protect commercial districts by not upzoning this area.

The low-rise, affordable character of the Bowery will be destroyed if this area is upzoned. The east side of the Bowery is already becoming gentrified with a growing number massive, out-of-character of boutique hotels, and upscale designer shops. Upzoning will encourage more luxury housing and more upscale commercial establishments, displacing the Bowery Lighting, Restaurant, and Jewelry Commercial Districts.

3. Create permanent affordable housing to protect Bowery residents.

New York City has always been home to residents of diverse income levels. There are many low- and middle-income residents who live on the Bowery in tenements and single-occupancy hotels. These residents should be protected from harassment and displacement. In addition, permanent affordable housing should be created, perhaps using the 421-A program, to insure that people of diverse income levels continue to call the Bowery home.

Thank you for supporting this effort.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Webster", is written over the "Yours truly," text.

K Webster
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Protecting and improving the community for the people who live and work here