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CHAIRWOMAN

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL MARKETS,  
INSURANCE AND  
GOVERNMENT SPONSORED ENTERPRISES

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

12TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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April 13, 2010

Amanda Burden, Chair  
City Planning Commission  
22 Reade Street  
New York, NY 10007

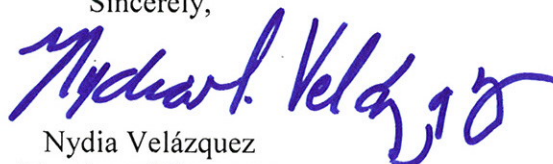
Dear Chairwoman Burden:

As the convergence point for the multiple historic neighborhoods of Chinatown, Little Italy, NoHo, and the East Village/Lower East Side, the Bowery is one of the City's oldest and most historically and culturally important thoroughfares. A gateway for waves of immigrants, it was the city's first entertainment district and helped launch tap dance, vaudeville, Yiddish theater, songwriters Stephen Foster and Irving Berlin, and much later, punk rock. More recently, the street has nurtured a thriving and influential community of artists, including William Burroughs, Mark Rothko, Maya Lin, Amiri Baraka, and others.

Today, rapid overdevelopment threatens to destroy forever the historic feeling of the Bowery and the historic neighborhoods surrounding it. The greatest danger is on the street's east side, where a lack of zoning restrictions encourages demolition, high-rise development, and the rapid displacement of long-time residents and small businesses. As high-rise developments create jarring disruptions to the community's traditional low-rise streetscape, the cultural diversity and creative ferment that has made the street so distinctive and historically unique is being threatened.

It is critical in a time of severe economic uncertainty that the City take effort to protect its residents and small businesses, while ensuring that developments proceed responsibly and with due consideration to the history and unique character of the areas they inhabit. Accordingly, I would like to express my strong support for the East Bowery Preservation Plan, which proposes to extend the low-rise zoning that protects west Bowery (in the Special Little Italy District and NoHo Historic District) to its endangered east side. This plan brings compatibility in zoning regulations to both sides of the street and will undertake important efforts to preserve the unique historic atmosphere of the Bowery. I urge you to give this proposal a thorough examination and I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Nydia Velázquez  
Member of Congress