

ONLINE

October 24, 2014



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UmkNXFI1Ho>

## Deputy Mayor: Commercial Rebuilding Has to Accompany Public Benefits

By Marc Bussanich

New York, NY—Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development, Alicia Glen, said at a forum on Thursday morning that the Bill de Blasio administration wants to make sure that New York City remains commercially vibrant for a long time by building smart, while recognizing that the city has an aging infrastructure.

Ms. Glen was the featured speaker on Thursday morning at the New York Hilton where the New York Building Congress released its newest construction forecast. According to the Congress, the city's construction activity is almost as robust as during the boom years of 2007 and 2008. The Congress is forecasting \$32.9 billion in construction spending in 2014, which includes spending on residential, commercial and government projects.

On the residential side, high-end construction such as luxury condominiums that command prices for one bedrooms way beyond the reach of those building them, is driving the residential boom. According to the building congress, the residential sector will account for \$10.9 billion of spending in 2014, \$11.7 billion in 2015 and \$12.4 billion in 2016.

Private developers obviously want to keep riding the wave of high-end construction, but in the accompanying video Ms. Glen said, after she spoke to a packed audience of developers, elected officials and labor officials, that private developers are going to have to be responsible for the attendant infrastructure upgrades when they build new office towers so that office workers can get to them without being stuck in hellish traffic.

The city is proposing to rezone a 73-block area surrounding Grand Central Terminal so that new state-of-the-art commercial buildings go up over several decades to ensure that New York City remains a competitive business hub with the rest of the world.

Glen sees the developer SL Green's commitment to transit upgrades at Grand Central Terminal to complement its new 1 Vanderbilt, 65-story office tower as the model for the city and private developers to use for commercial redevelopment throughout the city.

"This is the key to the whole thing. We want to make sure that New York City is commercially vibrant for the next 50 years. In order to do that, we have to build a lot of new buildings and we have to build smart. We also have to recognize that the city has an aging infrastructure, a growing population and we have to make sure that when people are building new, very exciting commercial office towers they're at the same time providing the resources in order to make sure people can get to those buildings," said Glen. "We see what we're doing with 1 Vanderbilt as a real model for saying to developers we will encourage you and allow you to build great new modern office towers, but you also have to help us figure out how to get people to and from those towers so that we have a healthy, sustainable neighborhood."