

June 20, 2017



**TESTIMONY OF THE NEW YORK BUILDING CONGRESS BEFORE THE NEW
YORK CITY COUNCIL, IN SUPPORT OF THE GREATER EAST MIDTOWN
REZONING**

The New York Building Congress is a membership coalition representing more than 500 constituent organizations and 250,000 tradespeople and professionals, including contractors, architects, engineers, unions, real estate managers, developers and owners, who comprise the New York building industry. Through its advocacy initiatives, industry research and networking events, the Building Congress serves as a forum through which leaders from across the building industry can collaborate to ensure the growth and success of New York and the building industry as a whole.

Consistent with its mission of building a better New York, the Building Congress strongly supports the City's Greater East Midtown zoning proposal. The proposed measure will generate thousands of jobs and economic opportunities for members of the building community and beyond.

The Greater East Midtown business district, or the 73-block area surrounding Grand Central Terminal, is a major job hub and one of the world's premier office districts. Its 600 million square feet of office space are home to more than a quarter of a million jobs and some of the city's most iconic office buildings. However, the neighborhood faces an urgent issue that threatens its premier status: its outdated office building stock. The current stock lacks the type of space and amenities that are desired by world-class tenants the area once attracted. Furthermore, the existing zoning framework prevents necessary improvements from being made.

Over the course of five years, in collaboration with various community stakeholders, the Department of City Planning (DCP) has formulated a plan to rezone East Midtown. The plan will incentivize the development of modern, sustainable, Class-A office space and reduce challenges for the redevelopment of outdated, overbuilt buildings. Without taking this proactive measure and implementing the proposed plan, the neighborhood will have failed to maximize on its full



potential. For this reason, the Building Congress urges the City Council to ensure the execution of DCP's rezoning plan.

In addition to updating the office building stock, the plan would offer more public spaces for residents to enjoy, as well as update the area's existing transit infrastructure. Other anticipated projects, including the Economic Development Corporation's (EDC) proposed East Midtown Waterfront Project, will supplement rezoning efforts by creating a 22-block esplanade to allow for a bikeway and walkway along the waterfront, providing residents with access to the East River.

The Building Congress will continue to encourage and actively promote the implementation of projects such as the proposed East Midtown Rezoning so as to ensure the stability and vitality of New York's thriving neighborhoods. On behalf of our constituent organizations and tradespeople who comprise New York's building industry, we hope the New York City Council will consider the advantages of the proposed plan and see that it is implemented.

Should you have any questions, or if any of our members can ever be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your time and continued support of our efforts to build a better New York.

Carlo A. Scissura, Esq.
President and CEO
New York Building Congress