

OneLIC Rezoning Teach-in

May 28, 2025 7pm to 8:30pm

“The Palestinian cause is not a cause for Palestinians only, but a cause for every revolutionary – as a cause of the exploited and oppressed masses in our era.”
— *Ghassan Kanafani*

Goals and Intentions

1. **Expose the Material Power of Zionism Through Real Estate**

Illuminate how Zionism operates not only as a political ideology, but as a material system deeply embedded in various capital like real estate — profiting from displacement. From the genocide of Palestinians to the gentrification of working-class neighborhoods, we connect how land, wealth, and violence are interconnected - **honoring that Palestine is everywhere.**

2. **Use the Elghanayan Family and LIC Rezoning as a Case Study for Queens**

The Elghanayan family—owners of TF Cornerstone and Rockrose—are central to Queens' wave of luxury development. Their influence in projects like the failed Amazon HQ2 bid and the ongoing LIC waterfront rezoning illustrates how real estate dynasties shape urban planning behind closed doors - tying anti pro tenant initiative and zionism.

3. **Reveal the Indirect Financial Channels Fueling Zionism**

[The Haaretz investigation uncovered over \\$220 million in tax-exempt U.S.](#) donations funneled to Israeli settlements — Much of it moves through stealthy, layered networks — often originating in sectors like real estate and philanthropy, shielded by legal loopholes and nonprofit status. As neighbors with full lives and jobs outside this work, we do our best to name what we can, with limited time and resources

4. **Target All Fronts: Exposing Zionism's Real Estate Power**

Zionism isn't just rhetoric — it's a material force rooted in land, capital, and displacement. Like a hydra, it has many heads and targets. **There's no perfect enemy or a perfect Zionist Target.** In Queens and beyond, goal is to resist pro-Zionist and pro-billionaire agendas displacing working-class communities. Palestine is one frontline of a global struggle — and our local fight is part of it.

5. **Offer Tools, Not Agendas — Trust the Community to Lead**

We are not here to recruit or dictate. We trust that many of you are already embedded in struggle and groups. Our role is to offer research, that deepen understanding of how Zionism and real estate intersect in Western Queens — empowering each person to act on what resonates, in whatever way they choose.

Community Agreements - for discussion

1. **Assume Good Intentions, Stay Accountable to Impact**

We all come in with different experiences. Assume good faith, but be open to feedback if harm is caused. This space values learning over ego. **Harm** is when someone causes injury, oppression, or violation — especially rooted in power, identity, or trauma. **Conflict** is a disagreement or tension between people — not always harmful, but often emotional or messy.

2. **Use “I” Statements**

Speak from personal experience to avoid generalizations and reduce defensiveness. “I” statements help keep discussion grounded and respectful.

3. **No Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, or Racism**

Criticizing Zionism is not anti-Jewish. We name systems, not identities. This space has zero tolerance for hate of any kind.

4. **This Is a Shared Learning Space, Not a Debate**

We’re here to share information and build understanding as neighbors, not to argue or “win.” Engage disagreement and conflict with curiosity and care.

5. **Step Up, Step Back**

Be mindful of how much space you take. Speak if you tend to hold back; make space if you tend to lead.

6. **Respect Confidentiality**

What’s shared here stays here. Protect each other’s vulnerability and privacy.

7. **Leave With Tools, Not Just Awareness**

Take what’s useful. We hope you leave with knowledge and further connections as Queens Neighbors to apply in your organizing, conversations, and choices.

8. **We practice principled engagement and principled struggle, not personal attacks.**

Naming harm or holding each other accountable is **not the same** as name-calling, dismissiveness, or personal attacks. We reject the replication of abusive and dismissive behaviors

Understanding Rezoning: What It Is and How OneLIC Is Unfolding

- **What is Rezoning?**
Rezoning is when the city changes land use rules to allow different types of development — like housing, offices, or open space — that weren't previously permitted.
- **Why Does Rezoning Happen?**
It's often used to respond to population growth, attract investment, or guide how a neighborhood evolves — but it can also bring risks like displacement or rising rents.
- **What is the OneLIC Plan?**
The OneLIC Neighborhood Plan is a sweeping rezoning proposal set to bring thousands of new housing units, jobs, and commercial space to a 54-block area in LIC that has remained largely untouched by the rapid development seen elsewhere in the neighborhood over the past two decades.
- **Where Is the Process Now?**
OneLIC is in the public review stage, where the community / community board,, borough president, and City Council provide feedback before any final decisions are made.



<https://qns.com/2025/05/onelic-neighborhood-plan-reshape-long-island-city/>

The OneLIC Rezoning: ten years in the making

- **Feb 2015** de Blasio [announces](#) LIC as one of the neighborhoods to be rezoned under the City's new mandatory inclusionary zoning program
- **In 2017** Dept. of City Planning (DCP) kicks off community meetings for the LIC rezoning that are met with [concern and frustration](#).
- **In July 2017** EDC selects TF Cornerstone via an RFP to develop [towers on public land](#) along the LIC waterfront.
- **In 2017** the Plaxalls pursue a [rezoning of the Anable basin](#); however, the plan gets pushback over [concerns](#) about insufficient transportation and infrastructure.



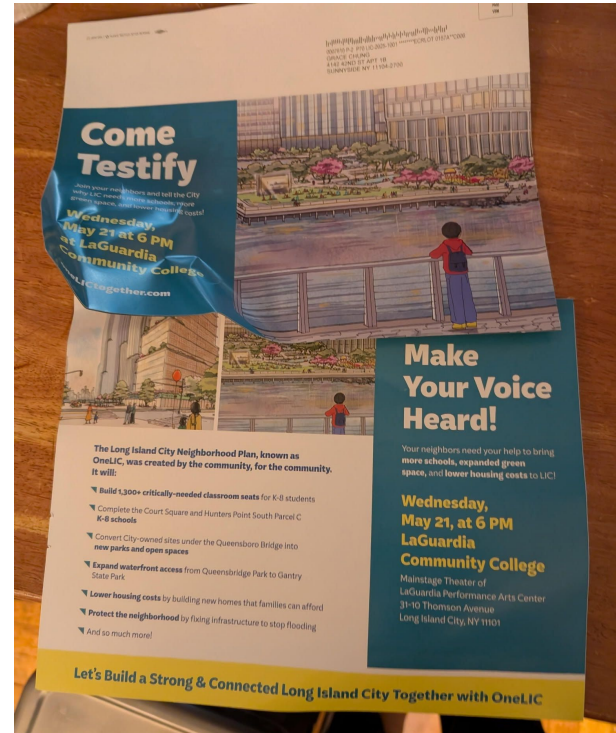
Public sites TF Cornerstone was selected to develop in 2017

The OneLIC Rezoning: ten years in the making

- **Fall 2018** [Amazon partners with TF Cornerstone and the Plaxalls](#) to develop its HQ2 along with new housing development in LIC.
- **2019** Amazon scraps its plans for HQ2 in the face of strong community opposition. Following Amazon's departure, TF Cornerstone, Plaxalls and other developers form ["YourLIC"](#) and pursue a rezoning of 28-acres in LIC
- **Fall 2020** Community opposition spurs the City cuts ties with "YourLIC", but the mayor's office states: **"TF Cornerstone is and will continue to be our partner on the public sites."**
- **March 2020** NYC shuts down in response to COVID-19 pandemic and [suspends rezoning actions](#).

The OneLIC Rezoning plan enters ULURP

- **Nov 2023** DCP and CM Julie Won kick off the community engagement progress for [OneLIC plan](#), a massive upzoning of 54-blocks of LIC
- **April 2025** The OneLIC rezoning plan enters the city's [Uniform Land Use Review Procedure \(ULURP\)](#), following certification by the City Planning Commission.
- **May 5, 2025** EDC [announces](#) an RFI for public sites on LIC's waterfront.
- **May 2025** An anonymous group launches [onelictogogether.org](#) (now shut down) to lobby for the rezoning and funds two rounds of mailings to rally support for the rezoning.
- **May 21, 2025** community boards 1 and 2 host a joint hearing on the rezoning plan. Many cite concerns over gentrification and lack of committed funding for infrastructure. ([CBS News](#))





Left: Hudson Yards

Kimmelman, M. (2019, March 14). *Hudson Yards Is Manhattan's Biggest, Newest, Slickest Gated Community. Is This the Neighborhood New York Deserves?*

Right: From the city's presentation, a rendering of how the OneLIC Rezoning waterfront would be developed.

Western Queens Community Land Trust. (n.d.). *Make your voice heard on the LIC Plan now!*. Retrieved May 26, 2025, from

<https://mailchi.mp/wqclt/licplan-speakup>



Assessing the Scope, Scale, and Gentrification of the OneLIC Rezoning Plan

[Hudson Yards Size and Scope](#) - Total Area: 17 blocks / 28 Acres

[OneLIC Rezoning Plan](#) – Size and Scope- Total Area: 54 full or partial blocks, covering over 135 acres - more than double Hudson Yards

Since the completion of the Hudson Yards development in 2019, neighboring areas like Hell's Kitchen have experienced an increase in rental prices, despite the influx of new housing.

- According to historical rental data, the average monthly rent for a **studio apartment** in Hell's Kitchen, Manhattan, has increased from [\\$3,282 in 2019](#) to [\\$3,697 in 2025](#), marking an approximate **12.6% increase** over the six-year period.
- [The Hudson Yards case study and report](#) - strongly implies that the OneLIC Rezoning could accelerate gentrification in neighborhoods near Long Island City, potentially driving up rents as demand rises and the area becomes more attractive to higher-income residents.

According to the recent DCP presentation on the OneLIC Rezoning, a displacement study for the OneLIC Rezoning was not deemed necessary as part of the Environmental Impact Studies.

History of Rezoning and Broken Promises

1. Atlantic Yards / Pacific Park (Brooklyn)

- **Promises Made:** The 2005 Community Board Agreement for this project, which includes the Barclays Center, pledged 10,000 jobs, 2,250 affordable housing units, a public plaza, and contracts for minority- and women-owned businesses.
- **Broken Commitments:** Many of these promises remain unfulfilled. For instance, the "urban room" public space was never constructed, and only a fraction of the affordable housing units have been completed. Oversight was minimal, and the community groups involved lacked the capacity to enforce the agreement.

2. East Harlem Rezoning (Manhattan)

- **Promises Made:** Approved in 2017, the rezoning included plans for affordable housing and community investments.
- **Broken Commitments:** Community groups have expressed concerns that the rezoning has led to increased displacement and gentrification, with insufficient affordable housing delivered. The article argue that the plan has not adequately protected existing residents from rising rents and development pressures.

History of Rezoning and Broken Promises (cont'd)

East New York Rezoning (Brooklyn) – 2016

- **East New York Rezoning (Brooklyn) – 2016**

Promises: 1,300 affordable housing units, \$12M for home repairs, infrastructure upgrades (e.g. new school, park improvements).

- **Failures:** Many improvements were long overdue; rezoning seen as accelerating gentrification without delivering promised levels of affordable housing.

- **Source:**

<https://gothamist.com/news/grading-de-blasio-in-east-new-york-mayors-first-rezoned-neighborhood-promise-s-fall-short>

Who is the Elghanayan family?

- **TF Cornerstone:** Founded and led by Tom & Fred Elghanayan
- **Rockrose:** Led by Henry Elghanayan and his son Justin
- The Elghanyans are [one of the biggest real estate developer families](#) in NYC (in terms of land ownership and earnings) in NYC, with many properties in LIC. The family was worth more than **\$2 billion** as of 2015 ([Forbes](#)).
- Holds leadership roles in REBNY and makes significant political and philanthropic contributions



The Elghanayan's family's alignment with REBNY and NYC elections

- **REBNY leadership**: Henry serves on the Executive Committee the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) and his son Justin serves on REBNY's Board of Governors.
- **REBNY donations**: Henry, Tom and the TF Cornerstone company have collectively donated more than \$200,000 to the REBNY PAC; And K I Elghanayan Family Foundation regularly donates to the REBNY Foundation.
- **Fix the City**: Tom and Fred Elghanayan have also donated \$50,000 to the Fix The City super pac, joining billionaire Bill Ackman and real estate developers to support Cuomo's campaign for mayor.



Tress, L. (2025, May 15). NYC mayoral frontrunner Cuomo calls vote a 'litmus test' on far-left foes of Israel. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/nyc-mayoral-frontrunner-cuomo-calls-vote-a-litmus-test-on-far-left-foes-of-israel/>

The Elghanayan family's alignment with Zionism

- From 2017 - 2023, Fred's family foundation, the [Corner Foundation](#), has made a grant of \$15,000 every year to the UJA Federation. The foundation also regularly supports Hillel (Cornell).
- From 2017 - 2023 Tom's family foundation, the [K T Elghanayan Family Foundation](#) has made a grants of \$15,000 (and more) every year to UJA Federation. Tom is also a [Urim v'Tumim Fellow](#) at Slifka Center at Yale.



Madeline is the wife of Tom and brands herself as a “luxury real estate maven” on her Instagram

TO NOTE: The 990 form is released after an organization files and the IRS processes it, which takes time to go on public record. Records for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 are not yet fully available yet. The findings presented are based on the most recently released data.

The Elghanayan family's alignment with Zionism (Cont'd)

Hillel International (e.g., Cornell Hillel)

- **Organizational Stance:** Hillel International is the largest Jewish campus organization worldwide. [It maintains a "Standards of Partnership" policy that prohibits partnerships with groups opposing Israel's right to exist or supporting the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions \(BDS\) movement.](#)
- **Pro-Israel Programming:** Hillel offers extensive pro-Israel programming and employs post-graduate fellows from Israel through the Jewish Agency for Israel. It is also a major partner of the Birthright Israel program, and has hosted controversial IDF-affiliated speakers, [including former spokesperson Ronen Manelis, whose appearance at Harvard Hillel prompted student protests over his role in past military operations.](#)

Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale

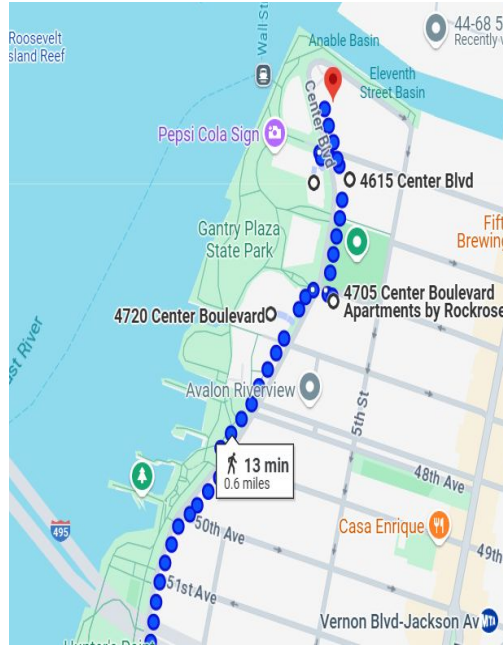
- **Mission and Activities:** The Slifka Center serves as the hub for Jewish life at Yale University, promoting Jewish identity and community.
- **Connection to Israel:** The center fosters a living connection to the State of Israel and hosts pro-Israel groups such as Yale Friends of Israel (YFI), which engages students in Israeli culture, society, history, and Birth right trips to Israel.

UJA-Federation of New York

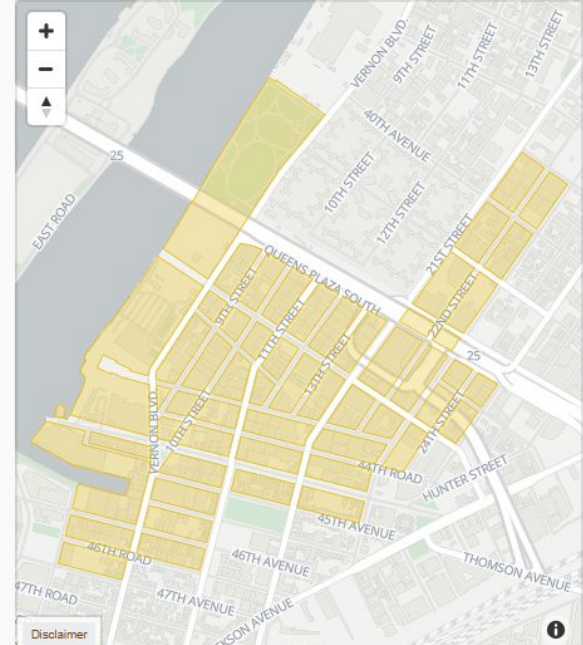
- **Mission and Activities:** UJA-Federation is one of the largest Jewish philanthropic organizations globally. It supports Jewish communities in New York, Israel, and worldwide, funding a network of nonprofits, including those in Israel.
- **Support for Israel:** The organization has a history of raising significant funds for Israel, including emergency funds in response to crises.

How the Elghanayans could benefit from OneLIC

- **Increased property values throughout LIC.** TF Cornerstone and Rockrose both own property adjacent to the rezoning boundaries.
- **Possibility of acquiring public land.** TF Cornerstone has long pursued an upzoning of public land to build private towers, connected to their waterfront properties (e.g. 2017 EDC RFP, 2018 partnership with Amazon, and 2019 “Your LIC” plan)



[Google Maps of Rockrose / TF Cornerstone properties on the waterfront](#)



<https://www.licplan.nyc>

Next steps in the rezoning and what you can do

1. **Testify at the June 5 [community board 2 meeting](#)** (in person & hybrid) @ Sunnyside Community Services, 43-31 39th St., Suite 2B, Sunnyside, NY at 6:30pm.
2. **Speak out at the June 18 [community board 2 vote](#)** on the OneLIC rezoning (in-person & hybrid) @ Sunnyside Community Services at 6:30pm.
3. **Contact CB2 and CB2 now to urge them to vote no:**
onelictestimony@gmail.com & district26@council.nyc.gov

Speaking at the Community Board: What to Expect & How to Prepare

 June 5 |  6:30 PM |  Sunnyside Community Services, 43-31 39th St., Suite 2B | In Person & Hybrid - Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87887863600?pwd=V96X9HVZDDP7eylEzhampbfem4Nfkt.1#success>

Before the Meeting

- **Arrive early (by 6:15 PM)** to sign up to speak (whether online or in person)
- Let organizers know if you're joining remotely so they can add you to the Zoom queue
Prepare your **testimony in advance** and **practice reading it out loud**

Timing Matters

- Although the official time limit is 3 minutes, **recent meetings have enforced a 1-minute limit**
- **To be safe, assuming patterns, keep your testimony to 1 minute** (~150 words max)
- Be clear, focused, and direct — **lead with your strongest point**

Suggested Structure of a Strong 1-Minute Testimony **(all of this is suggestive, take what is useful)**

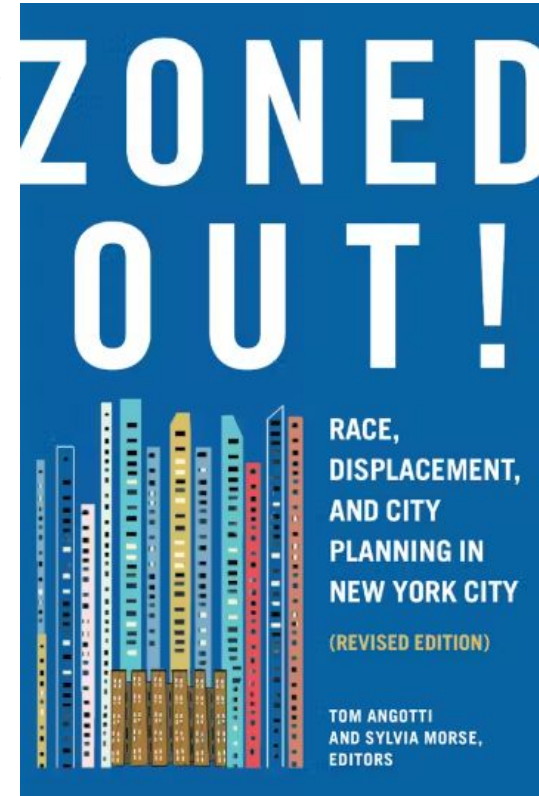
1. **Skip announcing your name to save time, they will announce your name, however name your connection to the neighborhood**
(I live/work/organize in Sunnyside/Woodside/Jackson Heights/Astoria...")
2. **Clearly state your position** on the rezoning (oppose/raise concern)
3. **Give 1 key reason or lived experience**
4. **Close with a specific call** to the Community Board
("Please vote no on this rezoning that will displace working-class families...")



 June 5 |  6:30 PM |  Sunnyside Community Services, 43-31 39th St., Suite 2B | In Person & Hybrid

Resources

- [The Hundred Years' War on Palestine by Rashid Khalidi](#) - Khalidi presents a narrative of Palestinian resistance against Zionist and imperialist endeavors over a century. He discusses how land dispossession and economic strategies were employed in the broader context of settler colonialism
- [All That's Left to You by Ghassan Kanafani](#) –Kanafani explores the psychological toll of exile through the story of a brother and sister living as refugees in Gaza. The novella examines how displacement and expulsion fractures identity, relationships, placing personal loss within the broader context of colonial violence, elements of gentrification is also explored.
- [Summary](#) of the OneLIC rezoning and community concerns
- [Flyers](#) about the OneLIC rezoning
- [FAQ](#) on the Elghanayan family and their ties to zionism connection to the rezoning
- [Urban Planning & Rezoning Glossary Definition](#)
- [Zoned Out! Race, Displacement, and City Planning in New York City](#)
- [Emergent City](#) (film) - Documentary about a Brooklyn neighborhood resisting and defeating developers in Industry City changes. It's about power, money, and who shapes the city.



Developing Talking Points and Planning Testimony Strategy - 🧠 Brainstorming

🧠 Tips for First-Time Speakers

- It's okay to **read your statement** — bring a printed or written copy
- You don't need to be an expert — **your voice and experience are valid**
- Stay calm, speak slowly, and **don't let intimidation silence you**
- You're speaking for your community — **your testimony matters**

**Neighbors will be there with
water and refreshments
during the CB Meeting - We
Take Care of Each Other**