

## NEWS

## In Windsor Terrace, a housing dispute ensnares Mayor Adams' sweeping reform plan



By David Brand  
Published Sep 9, 2024  
[76 comments](#)

Share [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [m](#)

**We rely on your support to make local news available to all**  
Make your contribution now and help Gothamist thrive in 2024. [Donate today](#)

Mayor Eric Adams' sweeping plan to fuel housing development still has a few months to go before the City Council decides on its final fate, but the proposal is already factoring into a bitter building dispute brewing in Brooklyn.

The industrial laundry company Arrow Linen Supply [filed an application](#) last year to change zoning rules on U-shaped lots along Prospect Avenue in Windsor Terrace to allow for the construction of a pair of 13-story towers with around 240 apartments combined.

Supporters of the proposal say it's the kind of project New York City needs to address a dire housing shortage. But opponents of the plan say the complex is too big for a section of the neighborhood mostly made up of low-rise buildings — and could get even bigger if the City Council approves Adams' zoning tweaks.

The response to the proposed complex from neighbors, elected officials and housing policy experts [follows the familiar pattern of other local development debates](#). But unlike some of its predecessors, the Windsor Terrace plan contains a twist related to the mayor's pending rezoning package, [known as the City of Yes plan](#).

A group of neighbors, organized under the name Housing Not Highrises, sued last week to block the city from starting the lengthy land-use-review process until after the council weighs in on Adams' City of Yes plan — because the zoning reforms could allow developers to add more bulk or extra floors, potentially up to 19 total, in [exchange for more affordable units](#). They argue in their lawsuit that the public and their representatives can't make an accurate assessment of the Arrow Linen proposal until after a vote on the City of Yes plan.

But an appellate judge on Friday ruled that the approval process could proceed, kicking off the discussion that will be held a community board hearing Monday night — the first milestone in a months-long protocol that could eventually lead to approval by the council and mayor.

Later this month, a panel of judges will consider additional testimony and documents in the lawsuit. The two sides could be back in court in November for a scheduled hearing.

Housing Not Highrises members said they considered the judge's decision a "win."

A Department of City Planning spokesperson referred questions to the city Law Department. Nicholas Paolucci, a Law Department spokesperson, said the city was "pleased that the court recognized there was no legal basis to halt" the review process amid "an historic housing shortage."

On Monday morning, Councilmember Shahana Hanif said she was happy the court allowed the public review process to begin. She said she is optimistic that Arrow Linen and its partner Apex Development Group will put forth a plan that includes more affordable housing.

After a rezoning, developers must price at least a quarter of newly created apartments for low- and middle-income residents, city rules mandate.

"I have been clear for many, many months that I'm looking at this project from a deeper affordability perspective," Hanif told Gothamist. "I'm not coming in saying, 'It needs to be this height, at this level of affordability,' when we are in an affordable housing crisis."

Hanif declined to say whether she outright supports the proposal, but her opinion is key to the project's ultimate fate because the City Council typically defers to the local member on land use issues in a district.

For their part, Housing Not Highrises members say they're not opposed to new housing, but that they're just opposed to this specific plan. The group says it wants an affordable housing developer to take over the plan and build a smaller complex with more affordable units.

"Ultimately, what we're fighting for is to stop Arrow's get-rich, 19-story twin tower monstrosity with a bogus, small amount of quote-unquote affordable housing no one can afford that's totally out of scale," said Housing Not Highrises member Jack Walsh, who lives in Windsor Terrace.

But Arrow Linen spokesperson Michael Woloz shot back at the opponents, who he said are trying to kill a housing plan through legal maneuvering and haven't come forward with a credible plan for a more affordable development.

"It is appalling and outrageous that a handful of wealthy homeowners associated with a NIMBY [not in my backyard] group misleadingly called Housing not Highrises would bring a legal action to stop a project that will deliver sorely needed housing, including affordable housing," Woloz said.

But some local residents are backing the proposal.

---

Rachel Fee, executive director of the policy group New York Housing Conference, lives in Windsor Terrace. Fee said she understands her neighbors' concerns, but that the city's housing shortage demands more development like the Arrow Linen proposal.

"Local opposition to housing is nothing new and it's exactly the reason we have a housing shortage and why prices keep going up and up," Fee said. "Like in every community people really care about their neighborhood and they feel like they're protecting something they love from change, but right now it's up to every community to look beyond the impact on their block."

Arrow Linen and its representatives will present the plan to Brooklyn's Community Board 7 Monday night.

In June, board members voted to approve the City of Yes proposal, a required step in the land use review process before a binding council vote would take place later this year. The board included conditions that the final plan include more affordable housing requirements tailored to the lowest-income New Yorkers, like families of three earning around \$42,000.

RELATED STORIES