



Community District Education Council 26

New York City Department of Education

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Subject: Objection to proposed apartment development with application numbers: 250261ZMQ and N250262ZRQ

Dear Chair Paul DiBenedetto and District Manager Joseph Marziliano, Queens Community Board 11 (CB 11),

The Community Education Council (CEC) 26, representing the families and students of one of the highest-performing yet most overcrowded school districts in New York City, strongly opposes the proposed 13-story, 324-unit apartment development at 175-05 Horace Harding Expressway (Application numbers 250261ZMQ and N250262ZRQ). While we support the City’s goal of expanding affordable housing, this particular project is fundamentally incompatible with the character, infrastructure, and educational capacity of the community. It will have permanent detrimental effects for the residents in the Auburndale and Fresh Meadows neighborhoods along at least three major dimensions:

Neighborhood Character: The surrounding neighborhood consists entirely of low-density, single-family homes. Inserting a monolithic, high-density 13-story, 324-unit apartment complex that towers over the surrounding two-story homes would permanently alter the architectural integrity, green space balance, and small-scale residential character for the worse. Approving the R7 zoning change would also set a dangerous precedent for similar conversions in the area.

Inadequate Infrastructure: The proposed development is located in one of the most overcrowded school districts in New York City. The public schools that serve this neighborhood were not designed to support high-density housing, and the recently passed state law on limiting class sizes calls into question the soundness of this high-density development. Furthermore, the specific schools serving the neighborhood are among the most overcrowded in the city, operating far above each school’s capacity; they simply cannot absorb a further increase in student enrollment. According to the Department of Education’s Enrollment, Capacity, and Utilization Report (2024-25 School Year), the utilization rates for the schools serving this immediate area are as follows:

School Level	School Name	School Address	Distance to Development	School Utilization Rate
Elementary	P.S. 173	174-10 67 Ave	0.46 miles	127%
Middle School	J.H.S. 216 George J. Ryan	64-20 175 Street	0.17 miles	131%
High School	Francis Lewis High School	58-20 Utopia Parkway	0.17 miles	171%

Traffic and parking: The proposed development is situated at the heavily trafficked junction of the Long Island Expressway and Utopia Parkway. A development of 324 units at this junction will generate a significant increase in traffic, making it much more dangerous for school children to cross a very busy intersection. The northern boundary of the property, 59th Ave, is a quiet street situated directly across Francis Lewis High School, with an enrollment of over 4,500 students. A high-density development will make this low trafficked street very unsafe for students, especially since it is designated for school buses and parents to drop off and pickup students. In addition, street parking is already very difficult to find in this residential neighborhood, with staff at a very large high school competing for limited parking spaces.

CEC 26 formally requests the Community Board to reject the zoning change associated with this proposal. Developing a new residential tower without first addressing existing infrastructure deficiencies would represent a serious failure of planning responsibility. Given the severe lack of school capacity in District 26, we urge CB 11 to instead consider this site for a new public school, which would serve a clear and urgent public need. Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,
Community Education Council 26
Approved on October 16, 2025