

**Community Board 8  
Webex Virtual Meeting  
March 11, 2021  
6:15 PM**

**Members Present**

Kiermoni Allison  
Glinda Andrews  
Desmond Atkins  
Lisa Atkinson  
Princess Benn-James  
Gail Branch-Muhammad  
John Buckholz  
Robert Callahan  
Nora Daniel  
James Ellis  
Kevin Farley  
Drew Gabriel  
Tamika Gibbs  
Nizjoni Granville  
Igenie Harris-Blenman  
Marva Henry  
Xeerxeema Jordan  
Sarah Lazur  
Elaine Mahoney  
Kalvis Mikelsteins  
Yahya Raji  
Adam Sachs  
Mark Thurton  
Greg Todd  
Ethel Tyus  
Gib Veconi  
Kimberly Watson  
Irsa Weatherspoon  
Sharon Wedderburn  
Robert Witherwax  
Deborah Young  
Vilma Zuniga

**Members Absent/Excused**

Wayne Bailey  
Julia Boyd  
Hanjy Charles  
Helen Coley  
Andrea Ferris  
Fred Frazier  
Regina Kinsey  
Mireille Lemaine  
Robert Puca  
Brian Saunders  
Meredith Staton  
Karmisha Superville  
Audrey Taitt-Hall  
Yves Vilus

**Elected Official & Agency Representatives Present**

Kim Robinson, Councilwoman Alika Ampry-Samuel  
Orlando Ross, Congresswoman Yvette Clark  
Karen Chambers, DA Eric Gonzalez  
Petula Hanley, Assemblywoman Stefani Zinerman  
Khalid Jemmott, Assemblywoman Diana Richardson  
Raul Rothblatt, Councilman Robert Cornegy  
Arna Lipkind, Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo  
Damaris Falero, Dept. of Buildings  
David Nussbaum, Dept. of Buildings

**CB 8 Staff**

Michelle George, District Manager  
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

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The regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:25 PM by Ms. Ethel Tyus, Chairperson.

**Acceptance of Minutes** – The minutes of the last meeting were accepted with any necessary corrections.

**Correspondence**—CB 8 newsletter and other pertinent information was distributed via email.

Ms. Tyus asked Mr. Steven Williams to say a few words about the Accessible Dispatch Program.

**Accessible Dispatch Program** – Mr. Steven Williams

Mr. Williams announced that the Accessible Dispatch Program (ACP) is a taxi service that connects the community to wheelchair accessible taxis. Accessible Dispatch gives individuals with disabilities the ability to request a wheelchair accessible taxi from anywhere in New York City. Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in all five boroughs. There is never an additional fee for passengers to use this service. All passengers pay only the standard metered fare set by the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC).

Vehicles utilized are larger than a traditional taxi but available for the same fare. Riders can share the vehicle with their friends as there is room for up to four passengers. All drivers are trained to assist people with physical handicaps into and out of the vehicle. Passengers do not need to be wheelchair bound to utilize the service, and there is tremendous benefit to the program. All participants have to do is call the call center, visit the website, or use the free app to dispatch a taxi to their location. Overall, it is a great way to allow people to get out and about during the pandemic, even if they have physical limitations.

Mr. Atkins asked what the specific benefits of the ADP versus something like Access-A-Ride (AAR). He was informed that one of the primary benefits is that riders do not have to pre-qualify for the service like they do with AAR. Additionally, you do not have to ride with strangers to your appointments; instead, it is a private taxi. All vehicles are sanitized between riders, there is a partition between passengers and drivers just like a traditional taxi, and it is a 24-hour on-demand service much like Uber or Lyft. You can access the cab program so long as you live in the five boroughs.

Anyone seeking additional information on the program can call 646-599-9999. Representatives are available 24 hours a day. You can also email [accessibledispatch@mtm-inc.net](mailto:accessibledispatch@mtm-inc.net), or visit [www.accessibledispatch.com](http://www.accessibledispatch.com) for additional information.

Ms. Tyus thanked Mr. Williams for the information and opened the floor for elected official representatives.

**Ms. Arna Lipkind** from Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo's office announced that constituent services are available Monday through Friday from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM. If you need assistance, please call 718-260-9191. Additionally, you can email [alipkind@council.nyc.gov](mailto:alipkind@council.nyc.gov) if you need assistance.

Finally, two locations in or around the community are available as walk-in sites for COVID vaccines, and they are Medgar Evers College and Interfaith Hospital. Please call 718-643-4000 for additional vaccine information.

**Ms. Kim Robinson** from Councilwoman Alike Ampry-Samuel's office announced that she was not working for February as she recovered from COVID. She stated that she is happy to be back in service, and is available to assist constituents with issues. Her direct line is 646-574-7661, and she encouraged everyone to remain safe and vigilant during the ongoing COVID pandemic.

**Mr. Orlando Ross** from Congresswoman Yvette Clark's office stated that the office is open for constituents to obtain assistance. There will be a few events sent to the CB8 District Office for distribution as they are finalized. The Congresswoman recently held her State of the District Address, and there were over 4,000 viewers. He provided the link to the replay in the chat and it is also provided here [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67\\_L9LVCVSE&ab\\_channel=CongresswomanYvetteD.Clarke](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67_L9LVCVSE&ab_channel=CongresswomanYvetteD.Clarke) . If additional information is needed he can be reached at 347-963-8033

**Ms. Petula Hanley** from Assemblywoman Stefani Zinerman's office, brought greetings from the Assemblywoman. She stated that Assemblywoman Zinerman remains in Albany on business but sends her regards. Restoration Plaza is now serving as a COVID vaccination location from 9 AM to 6 PM until this coming Saturday, after which vaccinations will be available from 7 AM to 6 PM. Office staff will be available in the lobby to help residents make an appointment in person. You can also make an appointment online through the NYC portal by selecting Restoration Plaza. Finally, Ms. Hanley gave a succinct rundown of some of the important legislation moving through Albany, including a move to legalize recreational marijuana.

**Mr. Khalid Jemmott** from Assemblywoman Diana Richardson's office announced that the Assemblywoman is in Albany working on important legislation that will soon be published in the upcoming Richardson Report. Mr. Jemmott proudly announced that earlier this month the Assemblywoman presented Community Board 8 with a proclamation for the outstanding work done during the COVID pandemic.

**Mr. Raul Rothblatt** from Councilman Robert Cornegy's office announced that he is the new Communications Officer for the Councilman. He announced the weekly Wellness Wednesdays series, which distributes fresh food to the community every Wednesday. Next week, the distribution site will be Weeksville Heritage Center located at the corner of St. Marks Avenue and Buffalo Avenue.

Mr. Rothblatt announced that Councilman Cornegy introduced new legislation that bad landlords cannot get a permit to build any new buildings in the City. The purpose of the legislation is to avoid rewarding bad landlords. Additionally, the Councilman has introduced legislation to prevent filming in unsafe locations. He encouraged everyone to follow the Councilman on Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, Mr. Rothblatt read a statement on violence facing the Asian American community, and stated that violence should be solved like any other problem in the community: together.

Dr. Lazur asked for more information on landlords not getting a permit to build new housing, and stated that the CB 8 Housing Committee was interested in writing a letter on Intro 2050 and need guidance to get to the Councilmember.

Ms. Young thanked the Councilman on behalf of the Crown Heights North Association (CHNA) on the letter he issued regarding the Hebron project. She stated that the CHNA is seeking another letter in opposition to the unsightly development project as the developer continues to push forward.

Ms. Karen Crawford from Kings County District Attorney Eric Gonzalez's office stated that staff is still working remotely and can be reached via telephone at 718-250-4877. The DA's office would love to partner with community-based organizations on any COVID related events and especially vaccination events. Finally, the DA is hosting a Women's History Month event on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Details will be sent to the District office for distribution.

Ms. Tyus thanked all elected official representatives for their announcements and asked for reports from the following committees:

**Parks Committee** – Ms. Glinda Andrews, Chair; Mr. Greg Todd, Vice Chair

The Parks Committee met on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 via Webex. The committee heard a presentation from the Brooklyn Children's Museum regarding the Conceptual Design Submission of the Earth Science Garden. The Board initially voted on the retaining wall portion of the project in late 2019, and the Public Design Commission asked the museum to make a presentation on the Earth Science Garden.

Details: a 20,000 square foot earth science-based garden complete with traditional educational opportunities, gathering spaces, and community spaces. There will be three levels and two overlook areas to enjoy the scenery that will be created. The space will be entirely ADA accessible as the current stairs will be eliminated with the exception of a few emergency exit stairs, and has a hillside design with paths and slopes. The strategy is to restore what was there while contemporizing the space with plants, garden play stations, rest areas, and overlook areas.

The garden will not be accessible from the park. Instead, there will be one-way access from the museum with an emergency exit from the garden space into the park. The new retaining wall will be geologically themed in key locations and in line with the educational theme of the museum. Classes will also be staged in the garden, where there will be an amphitheater that will also be ADA accessible. All plantings and landscaping will be native plantings. The design, which highlights Brooklyn's glacial moraine, will contain an area for a dig and mining station to help visitors understand how Brooklyn neighborhoods got their names.<sup>i</sup>

The committee voted unanimously to support the exhibit portion of the Earth Science Garden and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Ms. Stephanie Hill-Wilchfort, Executive Director of the BCM, stated that this is an exciting project for the museum, which hasn't had a major exhibit since 2013. This is a large project and really exciting for visitors to the museum as the learning piece is about why Brooklyn has "slopes and heights" in neighborhood names. Learning will be accomplished through gross motor play and movement. There was a substantial grant from New York State to get the project started, and fundraising for the remaining funds is ongoing. The area will be the 20,000 square foot area between the back of the museum and Brower Park. Currently, structural problems that make the area unsafe are being repaired by the city for the earth science garden.

The museum remains open to the public Thursday through Sunday, and Thursday is pay what you wish. The goal is for the museum to open at full capacity by December. To bring this goal to fruition, new air filters were installed and health and safety measures taken on the floor. Ms. Hill-Wilchfort thanked the Board for all of its support during this time.

Ms. Granville asked for an update on the relocation of the Brower Park Library branch to the museum, and was informed that by December 2021, the space should be completed. The museum is currently operating as a book pick-up and drop off location.

Mr. Ellis made a motion to support the project. The motion was seconded by Ms. Weatherspoon and carried unanimously with 29 in favor.

The next meeting of the Parks Committee will be held on Thursday, April 6, 2021. All are welcomed to attend.

**SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee (SLAC)** – Mr. James Ellis, Chair; Mr. Robert Witherwax, Vice Chair

The SLAC Committee met on Monday, March 1, 2021 via Webex. The committee discussed the following:

**1. DISCUSSION OF THE FOLLOWING RENEWAL LICENSES:**

- Two Saints, 753 Nostrand Avenue – Full (DJ, recorded music, sidewalk open space under COVID programs)
- Cataldo's, 554 Vanderbilt Avenue –Wine/beer/cider
- Maison Yaki, 626 Vanderbilt Avenue –Full
- The Ryerson, 698 Nostrand Avenue –Full (outdoor space)
- Shh Secrets, 724 Nostrand Avenue –Full (DJ)
- Sharlene's, 353 Flatbush Avenue –Full
- Four and Twenty Blackbirds, 634 Dean Street –Wine/beer/cider
- Puerto Viejo, 564 Grand Avenue –Wine/beer/cider
- Nostrand Pub, 658 Nostrand Avenue –Full

The committee voted to support all renewals pending receipt of updated information and notification documentation. All requested info has been received by the District office. The committee hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Ellis reminded the community that as regulations loosen, there will continue to be growing pains for many businesses and residents accommodating a burgeoning and expanded commercial vitality. Businesses are trying to maintain jobs for the community and provide service. If you find an issue with an establishment, if it's not an emergency, you are encouraged to contact the MEND program offered through the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) that can offer alternative corrective measures rather than involving oversight agencies. Additionally, \$28.6 billion in restaurant loans is available, allowing for utilities, mortgage and rent, payroll, etc. All businesses are encouraged to look into the funds and loans and apply. We need to ensure our community gets its fair share.

Dr. Lazur made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs and carried unanimously with 30 in favor.

**The Committee also reviewed the following New Applications:**

**A. No. 7 Restaurant, 627 Vanderbilt Avenue – Full**

Details:

- Patron capacity 42, one bar with 12 seats; 5 tables with 2 to 6 seats each.
- Hours of Operation Sunday Noon to 11 PM; Tuesday thru Thursday 5 PM to 1 AM; Friday 5 PM to 2 AM; Saturday Noon to 2 AM.
- Backyard with capacity of 15 patrons to operate Sunday Noon to 10 PM; Tuesday thru Thursday 5 PM to 11 PM; Friday 5 PM to midnight; Saturday noon to midnight
- Three speakers interior, up to 7 employees per shift
- "Removal" application, meaning the applicant is relocating to a different address with the same principals and same method of operations.
- Brotherhood Baptist Church is directly next door, making it potentially a 200-foot exception. However, the applicant was encouraged to allow the SLA determine the legality of the nexus to the Brotherhood's space while contacting the house of worship and working with the pastor. They stated that their correspondence was not responded to.

The committee voted 12 in favor with 1 abstention to support the removal application that is treated as new and hopes that the full Board support its recommendation.

A number of questions were asked about the legality of a full license next door to a church. Mr. Ellis provided background information on the 200-foot rule and stated that it is the determination of the SLA to say yes or no to the request to the full license or only issue a beer/wine.

Mr. Veconi made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs and carried with a final tally of 29 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstention.

**B. King David Tacos, 611 Bergen Street –Beer/wine/cider**

Details:

- Two counters with 7 stools. Max capacity is 7
- Currently has tacos to go in multiple bagel and coffee shops in the District.
- Presented a separate leased outdoor space, and agreed to remove the outdoor speakers
- Capacity of the outdoor space is 50, which does not have the same conditions as a sidewalk café because it is a separately leased space, not city infrastructure.

The committee voted 13 in favor to support the application with the removal of the outdoor space and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Ms. Branch-Muhammad made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Veconi and carried with a final tally of 30 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstention.

The next meeting of the SLAC Committee will be held on Monday, April 5, 2021 at 6:15 via Webex. Details can be found on the Board's website. All are welcomed to attend.

**Land Use** – Ms. Ethel Tyus, Chair

The Land Use Committee met on Thursday, March 4, 2021 via Webex. The committee had many discussion items.

**ULURP Application for a Private Rezoning of 840 Atlantic Ave (C210249ZMK and N210250ZRK)**  
Stephanie Marazzi and Benjamin Stark presented an application from Vanderbilt Atlantic Holdings LLC /(owner: Anthony Musto) to upzone the site at 840 Atlantic Ave (B/L: 122/1, 9, 10, 68, 69, 70, &71) as follows: a zoning map amendment for an M1-1 to R6B to C6-3X and a zoning text amendment to designate a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area and allow flexibility in the location of the street wall in order to facilitate an 18-story mixed use development with 316 dwelling units (95 affordable units), 50,650 SF of retail and 7,490 SF of community facility space in the Prospect Heights neighborhood. The project was reviewed by the City Planning Commission and certified for the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) on 3/1/21.

Mr. Stark explained that their plan includes 20' wide sidewalks on Atlantic Ave and 29' wide sidewalks on Vanderbilt Ave. Their plan also includes a 15-year lease on a ground floor community space for Creative Outlet, an arts organization created and managed by Jamel Gaines.

On 3/3/21, Mr. Veconi emailed the following summary of the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council Housing Committee's discussion of the project and recommendations:

If the application were to move forward, the zoning for the portion of the area fronting Atlantic Avenue should be reduced from C6-3X (9.7 FAR) to C6-2A (7.2 FAR). This would bring the project closer into line with the Community Board's M-CROWN proposal for mixed-use commercial/residential density along Atlantic Avenue.

The portion of the lot fronting Pacific Street should be reduced from C6-3X to R7A (4.6 FAR) with a C1-4 overlay, in keeping with the existing zoning on Vanderbilt Avenue. Since buildings on the east side of Vanderbilt Avenue near the rezoning area are significantly underbuilt relative to allowable density, the R7A district in the area proposed for rezoning would provide a transition between the larger building at the corner of Atlantic Avenue and the current built environment on Vanderbilt Avenue.

The rezoned area should be mapped for MIH Option 1 (25% of residential units affordable at an average of 60% AMI, with 10% required at an average of 40% AMI) and MIH Option 3 (20% affordable at an average of 40% AMI).

The proposed building plan does not fall within the M-CROWN Neighborhood Rezoning framework adopted by CB 8, especially regarding height and density. However, the presenters indicated that they had consulted with the Dep't of City Planning and had been advised that the site supports the proposed 18 stories due to the broad widths of Atlantic and Vanderbilt Aves. The presenters pointed at 809 Atlantic (B/L: 2010/1 &59) with a 29 –story building on one lot connected to a four-story building on a second lot) and 550 Vanderbilt Ave (with 18-stories at B/L: 1129/7501) as comparable projects. It should be noted that 809 Atlantic was approved by the CPC in 2019 under the City's rules; and 550 Vanderbilt is part of Atlantic Yards/Pacific Park, approved under ESDC's purview without consideration for the NYC Zoning Resolution.

After some discussion on the discrepancy between DCP's published framework developed in concert with CB 8 and the position statements made to the applicant, Committee member Veconi moved to table the item. With a second on the motion by Ms. Lazur, the Committee voted 16 in favor of tabling the item with two abstentions. Under ULURP, CB 8 has 60 days to hold a hearing (counting from nine days after certification). Within that timeframe and any available extensions, the project will be presented to the full Board. The project timeline is available at <https://zap.planning.nyc.gov/projects/2018K0488>.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **1. City Council Speaker Proposal for *Planning Together* (Int 2186-2020)**

Ms. Annie Levers of the City Council's Office of Strategic Initiatives provided a brief presentation of Council Speaker Corey Johnson's proposal for a 10-year comprehensive, citywide planning process incorporating budgeting and strategic planning with land use. The proposal would create long term steering committee consisting of four members appointed by the Mayor, four by the Speaker, and one each by the Borough Presidents. Reportedly, the Dep't of City Planning opposes the bill. We expect to receive a copy of the presentation.



**2. Application to LPC for Handicapped Ramp on Primary Façade and a Two-story Rear Extension at 1323 Dean Street (Crown Heights North Historic District)**

Mr. Yao Guo presented his client's plan to convert a four-story SRO at 1323 Dean Street in the Crown Heights North Historic District into four apartments. The plan includes a handicapped ramp to the basement and a two-story rear extension that will be only one in the row of similarly sized buildings in that segment of the historic district. A few neighbors attended with concerns regarding the condition of the building whose owner died several years ago. Mr. Guo indicated that the owner is Quang Tinh Tran. However, the deed is still in Estate status according to ACRIS. A letter from the Crown Heights North Association recommending changes was read into the record. The project does not have a hearing date for LPC. Mr. Guo agreed to discuss the recommendations with his client and return to for a follow-up presentation.

**3. Preliminary Review of Private Rezoning Proposal for 1034-1040 Atlantic Ave.**

Mr. Elie Pariente was present to offer a second review of his upcoming ULURP application. Due to the lateness of the hour, Mr. Pariente asked to provide an updated project presentation at the April meeting.

The next meeting of the Land Use Committee will be held on Thursday, April 1, 2021. All are welcomed to attend.

**Health** – Ms. Elaine Mahoney and Ms. Tamika Gibbs, Co-Chairs

Ms. Gibbs announced that the Health Committee will meet on March 18<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM via Webex. The committee will begin planning an upcoming health-related event.

**Housing (Advocacy)** – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Chair; Mr. Adam Sachs, Vice Chair

The Housing Committee met on Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> via Webex. In the absence of the Chair, the meeting was chaired by Mr. Adam Sachs, Vice Chair. Mr. Sachs stated that the committee discussed the "Expand Right to Counsel" legislation, which would make more zip codes eligible for free counsel in eviction cases. Right now, the right to free counsel is only offered to select zip codes. The legislation is in the City Council and 22 members have signed on to it. Four additional members need to endorse the bill to have all of the City's zip codes included. The committee agreed to write a letter to Councilman Cornegy, as he has not signed onto the legislation as of yet. The next meeting of the Housing Committee will be on Wednesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> via Webex. All are welcomed to attend.

**Environment/Sanitation/Transportation (EST)** – Mr. Robert Witherwax, Chair; Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Vice Chair

The EST Committee will meet on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:15 via Webex. The NYC Dept. of Transportation will discuss the upcoming season of Open Streets. All are welcomed to attend.

**Youth and Education** – Ms. Nora Daniel, Interim Chair; Ms. Marva Henry, Interim Vice Chair

Ms. Henry announced that the Youth and Education Committee is currently having working group meetings weekly to plan a series of events. The first one will be a music industry event to help students know and understand the types of careers that are available in the music industry. Too often, the goal is to be a performer, but there are so many more options and opportunities for those behind the scenes.

**Seniors** – Ms. Gail Branch-Muhammad, Chair; Ms. Regina Kinsey, Vice Chair

Ms. Muhammad announced that the Seniors Committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month via freeconferencecall.com. She proudly announced that most of the seniors that had expressed a desire to get vaccinated have done so. She thanked Adam Sachs of Heights and Hill for the presentation on resources available for seniors at the last meeting. Additionally, earlier in the day, food was distributed to 100 seniors. She thanked Ms. Henry and her children, as they volunteered to help with the distribution.

At the April meeting, there will be a presentation on Ranked Choice Voting. It will be a very elementary presentation to make it as easy as possible to understand. Finally, there is a community refrigerator at 1144 Bergen Street by New York Avenue. Anyone in need is welcomed to visit the refrigerator and anyone that wants to donate food is encouraged to do so.

**Public Safety** – Mr. Mark Thurton, Chair; Mr. Desmond Atkins, Vice Chair

Mr. Thurton announced that the committee discussed community issues at the February 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. He announced that the Neighborhood Coordinating Officer (NCO) meetings are beginning to resume on a regular schedule and will continue via Facebook live for the foreseeable future. 77th Precinct Commanding Officer Buttacavoli was recently promoted to Inspector.

Ms. Muhammad thanked Mr. Thurton for putting together the group of block and tenant associations to work on crime in the district.

Ms. Tyus thanked the committee chairs for their reports and announced that the Nominating Committee will be composed of Adam Sachs, who will serve as Chair; Tamika Gibbs, Elaine Mahoney, Marva Henry, and Mark Thurton. Nominations will be presented by the committee at the April meeting, where members will have an opportunity to nominate candidates from the floor. Ms. Tyus then opened the floor for public comments.

**Ms. Sharon Wedderburn** announced that she is a candidate for the 35<sup>th</sup> Councilmanic District but was cut off before she could mention the key areas of her platform.

**Mr. Jonathan Marable** from the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce announced that the Chamber is a NYC Small Business Resource network, and businesses can sign up on the website to get assistance with anything small business related, including PPP loans and grants.

A few links were placed in the chat that were of importance and added to the minutes: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Small Business Guidance & Loan Resources <https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources>.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

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<sup>i</sup> Moraines are accumulations of dirt and rocks that have fallen onto the glacier surface or have been pushed along by the glacier as it moves. The dirt and rocks composing moraines can range in size from powdery silt to large rocks and boulders. A receding glacier can leave behind moraines that are visible long after the glacier retreats.