



***THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS***

City Hall
New York, NY 10007
(212) 788-7116

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

October 11, 2012

Contact: Justin Goodman (212) 788-7116
Kelly Magee (212) 788-7259

***CITY COUNCIL VOTES TO APPROVE DEVELOPMENT OF
SEWARD PARK URBAN RENEWAL SITE***

New York, NY – Today, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Seward Park redevelopment project to facilitate the development of an approximately 1.65 million square feet mixed use and mixed income project. Uses will include commercial/retail, community facilities, and 1,000 dwelling units of which 500 will be permanently affordable. The Council voted 48-0-0 to approve the project.

The redevelopment of this area, which is part of the former Seward Park Extension Urban Renewal Area, has been more than 45 years in the making and will allow for the redevelopment of nine predominantly vacant parcels of city owned land on the Lower East side of Manhattan. The plan includes 15,000 square feet set aside for a potential public school and 10,000 square feet of open space.

Council Member Margaret Chin negotiated with the Administration to modify the City Planning Commission's proposal and secure many commitments including:

- The community will now have a very substantial role and significant input in the RFP process
- The Essex Street Market will remain a public market, with the potential to be relocated to one of the new development sites with the promise of comparable rent and space.
- Space on the site will be reserved to address a potential future need for a new public school
- Commitment by the administration to reach out and locate the former site tenants
- Encouragement of local development partners in the RFP process.
- Respondents to the RFP process will be required to submit a plan outlining their goals to include M/WBEs and the HireNYC program in their responses.
- Strengthened requirements for retail diversity
- Commitment by the administration to develop additional affordable housing units off-site adjacent to 21 Spring Street (vacant lot).

“Today’s vote to approve development on the SPURA site is truly history in the making,” **Council Member Margaret Chin**, said. “This vote means 500 new units of permanent affordable housing at SPURA and additional affordable housing offsite adjacent to 21 Spring Street. Thirty percent of affordable housing at SPURA will be reserved for low income individuals making less than \$40,000 a year. This is a significant step toward alleviating the chronic problem of overcrowding in our community. In addition, we will create a “Community Taskforce” that will work with the City to set the goals for the RFP and provide feedback on responses from developers. The Lower East Side’s voice will continued to be heard as this process moves forward. This is not only a momentous vote, but an example of what we can accomplish when the City and our partners in the community work together.”

"This is a historic day for our Lower East Side community," **Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver** said. "After a thorough, open and fair process, a true consensus was reached for the future of the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area. The plan approved by the City Council today is one that is responsive to the needs of all stakeholders and is the culmination of years of hard work and community input. I look forward to seeing this project move forward and to the beginning of a new and exciting chapter in the rich, diverse history of the Lower East Side. I want to commend Council Member Margaret Chin; Councilmember Rosie Mendez; Community Board 3 Chair Gigi Li; former Community Board 3 Chair Dominic Berg, whose tireless work on this issue contributed so much to the success we are celebrating today; and to everyone in our community who made their voices heard."

“I’m thrilled that with today’s Council action, we have allowed for the redevelopment of nine predominantly vacant parcels of city land on the Lower East side of Manhattan,” **City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn** said. “This project has been more than 45 years in the making, and I thank Council Member Chin for all of her hard work and for negotiating on behalf of the community to get the best deal possible.”

“I applaud the tireless, community-centric efforts of Council Member Margaret Chin and others—including the Seward Park Area Redevelopment Coalition and the Community Board 3 Task Force—throughout the entire Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA) redevelopment process,” **Council Member Rosie Mendez** said. “Thanks to the collective leadership and partnership of all stakeholders, this plan was meticulously developed to reflect and implement the concerns of the community at all stages of the process. The SPURA plan we approved today means hundreds of units of affordable housing will be coming to an area of manifest need, space will be reserved for the prospective creation of a school, scores of local jobs will be created, the right of returning tenants will be protected and the community will continue to have an effective voice going forward. I was tremendously proud to work alongside Council Member Chin during this important process and I know we will continue this close collaboration during the crucial implementation stage.”

“Today marks the beginning of a new chapter in the long history of the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area,” **Council Member Stephen Levin, Chair, Planning, Dispositions & Concessions**, said. “Thanks to the diligent work of Speaker Quinn, Councilmember Chin, the Community Board members, and everyone who spent countless hours to craft this proposal,

residents of the Lower East Side will finally have access to affordable housing, needed commercial and retail space, and usable open space at the foot of the Williamsburg Bridge,” said Councilmember Levin. “While it took many years to get to this point, the high level of community involvement and the willingness of all parties to maintain a constructive dialogue is a model that we can all look to as our city continues to evolve.”

STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT

Re: Council Approves Seward Park Redevelopment Project

Gigi Li, Community Board 3 Chair:

“The Lower East Side Community, along with its elected officials has been working tirelessly toward developing a balanced development plan for SPURA. Today's vote proves that when a variety of stakeholders work together and hold each other accountable, anything is possible.”

Dominic Pisciotta Berg, Former Community Board 3 Chair

Council Member Chin more than delivered on what she promised she would fight for leading up to the final Community Board 3 ULRUP vote. I hope this monumental achievement can be a model for how the City can engage in early dialogue with Community Boards and in turn how the Boards can work closely with their council members to ensure that the community's voices, heard through the Board's process, is reflected in the final ULURP. This is a solid example of how the community, Community Boards, the City, and elected officials can collaborate to find a consensus that will benefit so many residents and businesses."

Harriet Cohen, Seward Park Area Residents Coalition (SPARC) Chair:

“We are excited to see more permanent affordable units added to the plan and a real commitment for outreach and rent-up for eligible former site tenants. We are hopeful about the move and expansion of the Essex Street Public Market and the accommodation of existing merchants with moving costs and comparable rents and spaces. We applaud our local City Council representatives for making the plan more responsive to community needs.”

Ricky Leung, Community Board 3 member and Cherry Street Tenants Association President:

“Who should know best if this neighborhood needs a school than the parents and the children in our community. They made their voices heard. We are pleased that 15,000 square feet of space on Site-5 is to be set aside for a future public school. Now the community board, elected officials, and the community needs to work together to prove to Department of Education and the City that this community desperately needs another school; have it built and to educate our children - who are our future.”

Bob Zuckerman, Lower East Side Business Improvement District Executive Director:

“This transformative project offers only good news for our local economy, and the increase in daytime foot traffic that it provides will go a long way to support both new and existing merchants. We also look forward to continuing to work with Council Member Chin and our other partners in government to ensure that the Essex Street Market remains a critical retail anchor in our community. I know that many vendors share our enthusiasm for the opportunities that a new and expanded market facility will offer.”

Full List of Council Modifications/Commitments from City:

- ***100 more units added to SPURA*** (following breakdown of 50 percent affordable and 50 percent market rate)
 - Total number of units at SPURA site: 1000
 - Total numbers of affordable units: 500
 - 30 percent of units for low income individuals/families making less than \$40,000 annually (including 10 percent of low income seniors)
 - 10 percent for middle income/families
 - 10 percent for moderate income individuals/families
- Commitment from City for HPD-issued RFP for lot adjacent to ***21 Spring Street*** to be developed as affordable housing
- The City will reserve ***15,000 square feet of space of Site 5*** of the Seward Park Project until 2023 for development as a potential public school
- Community Taskforce
 - Prior to releasing the RFP, the City will meet with a Task Force designated by the Community Board to discuss their goals, including, but not limited to, preferences about ground floor retail uses.
 - Task Force will review the final RFP goals and selection criteria prior to City’s release of the RFP.
 - One of the selection criteria will be that the Task Force preferences will be considered in the final selection.
 - Upon receipt of developer proposals, the Task Force will receive summaries of the RFP responses from the City.
 - The City will discuss the proposals with the Task Force, and the Task Force will provide feedback to the City on which proposals meet the community goals.
 - This feedback will be formally considered as part of the selection criteria.
 - **Prior to final selection, the City will discuss the proposed selection with the Task Force**
- City and Council Member will use Best Efforts to identify former site tenants.

- Former tenants will be given preference for units for which they income-qualify within the Community board marking preference category for the affordable housing units.
- Essex Street Market, if a new Essex St. Market facility is built:
 - It will remain a public market
 - Vendors at the existing building will be given first opportunity to relocate to the new market facility and be offered comparable square footage.
 - **The rent schedules and planned increases in the new market facility for existing vendors will be commensurate with his or her rent at the time of the move.**
 - **NYCEDC will pay all reasonable moving-related expenses.**
 - The existing market will continue to operate until any new space is ready to accept vendors, and NYCEDC will help vendors through the transition.
 - If the SPURA project does not include a new Essex Street market, then the market will remain in its existing building.
- Encouraging Local Development Partners and Multiple Respondents
 - **Preference will be given to proposals that include a Local Partner;** defined as a locally-based organization or entity that has a history of improving the quality of life for Community Board 3 via social services, cultural activities, financial investments, and/or housing.
- Multiple Level of Housing Affordability
 - **Preference will be given to proposals that provide, within the prescribed income bands, lower income levels, at multiple tiers.**
- M/WBE Participation
 - Respondents will be required to submit M/WBE Utilization Plans in their responses.

- Local Hiring

The RFP will emphasize local hiring by requiring each respondent to include a HireNYC program plan. Preference will also be given to respondents who emphasize permanent jobs for individuals hired from the local area who make below 200% of the poverty level, as well as plans to retain and provide advancement for these employees.

Specifically, respondents will be encouraged to focus on the following goals:

- Hiring Goal: fill 50% of all new permanent jobs created in connection with hires from the local population who are making below 200% of the poverty level

- Retention Goal: retain 40% of these hires for at least 9 months
- Training Goal: provide future advancement within a year for at least 30% of these hires

Preference will also be given to those proposals that include skills-training and higher education opportunities for tenants.

- Storefront Requirements

The City shall deem any proposal that does not conform to the storefront requirements, as adopted by the Council, as non-responsive.

- **Sets a *minimum* of 3 storefronts on Broome (sidestreet) and 2 storefronts on Delancey Street (avenue).**
- This means the City cannot grant a waiver to supersede Council regulations.

###