



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

250 Broadway, Suite 1804
New York, NY 10007

****NEWS RELEASE ****

July 17, 2012

Contact: Kelly Magee (212) 788-7259 / (917) 828-3634 [Chin]
Justin Goodman (212) 788-7121 [Quinn]

***COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET CHIN SUPPORTS MODIFIED
PLAN FOR NYU 2031 CORE PROJECT***

*Secures commitment from NYU to eliminate an additional **17.4 percent** density above ground;
Mercer Building height reduced from **11 stories to 4 stories**, Zipper Building significantly scaled
back; fund maintenance and upkeep of public and private open space; immediately improve
public open space*

Community Facility or Public School planned at Bleecker Building site

July 17, 2012, New York, NY – Today, Council Member Margaret S. Chin announced major modifications to the New York University (NYU) 2031 expansion proposal ahead of a vote by the Council’s Committee on Land Use, Chaired by Council Member Leroy Comrie, and the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, Chaired by Council Member Mark Weprin. As part of the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), the City Council received the NYU 2031 application from the City Planning Commission (CPC) on June 7, 2012.

The modifications negotiated by Council Member Chin represent a **17.4 percent reduction** in density above ground level, or **212,000 sq. ft., overall**. This is in addition to modifications secured by the City Planning on June 6, 2012.

The modified plan presented to the Committees today represents a **26 percent reduction**, or 352,000 sq. ft., when compared to NYU’s original proposal, certified in January 2012.

“Throughout this process, I have tried to keep an open mind. I have maintained that *it is possible* to strike a balance that upholds the integrity of Greenwich Village and meets NYU’s immediate academic needs,” **Council Member Margaret Chin said**. “I am confident this proposal strikes that balance. I have achieved reductions in above grade density that respond directly to concerns expressed by my constituents, namely with regard to the Zipper and Mercer Street buildings. I have substantially reduced density on the superblocks, while securing commitments from NYU to improve open space and build community amenities that the Village is sorely lacking. I want

to express my support for this proposal moving forward and ask my colleagues in the City Council to stand with me.”

“I applaud Council Member Chin and NYU for coming to a reasonable agreement that best benefits the City, Community, and University,” **City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn**, said. “It has been a priority of the Council to ensure our educational institutions can both grow and flourish in a way that prepares student for jobs within the city workforce, and today we've allowed this University to expand in a way that both protects the neighborhood and promotes the growth of the city. I thank NYU for their willingness to work with the Council and their responsiveness to community concerns throughout the ULURP process.”

“I am pleased to say after hours of deliberation between NYU and the residents of Greenwich Village, the plan that the Land Use committee approved today is a compromise that balanced the desires of the community with the understanding that NYU needs to maintain a competitive edge,” **Council Member Leroy Comrie said**. “The plan substantially reduces the density in the zipper building, creates a new open space for community use that can be used twenty-four hours a day, preserves existing space and creates a maintenance fund to protect the interests of the community. NYU has promised and negotiated levels of compliance that ensures these agreements will stay intact. In the end both sides came together and focused on coming to a resolution. We must compliment Council Member Margaret Chin who spent many hours listening to all sides and working hard to ensure that her community was preserved and enhanced by this action. I would also like to thank Council Member Mark Weprin for his leadership and the committee members for their attention to detail and ability to ensure meetings maintained integrity, fairness, and an overall commitment to a transparent and balanced process.”

“After significant public input, including a nine-hour hearing, NYU has made serious concessions to address community concerns. I want to thank Council Member Margaret Chin and my colleagues in the Council for ensuring that NYU grows in a way that is sensitive to the needs of residents in Greenwich Village,” **Council Member Mark Weprin said**.

Over the past month, Council Member Chin has sought and won significant reductions in density on both the north and south superblocks, and specifically, the Mercer Street building. **Under the plan negotiated by Council Member Chin, the Mercer Street building will be a four-story 69,000 sq. ft. building. This is 64 percent smaller than what was approved by CPC.**

The footprints of the Mercer and LaGuardia Street buildings were reduced to allow for a *minimum* 60-foot distance from existing Washington Square Village buildings. This is equivalent to five traffic lanes, and will allow for unfettered access to interior open spaces, as well as more light and air around the buildings. At the maximum, the entryways into the interior space will span 78 feet.

The eight-story LaGuardia Street building will be reduced by 21,000 sq. ft.

On the south superblock, the density of the Zipper building will be reduced by 70,000 sq. ft. In particular, **the 14- story tower directly across from residential buildings on Mercer Street will be reduced to five stories.** This reduction in density is in direct response to concerns expressed by residents at 88 Bleecker Street and 200 Mercer Street. The Zipper building will be redesigned so that the bulk on the upper floors is pushed towards Houston Street and away from towers fronting Mercer and Bleecker Streets.

As of January 2012, the School Construction Authority (SCA) retained the option to build a school on the Bleecker Building site until 2025. **Under the modifications made by Council Member Chin, the SCA's timeline for signaling their intention to build a school will be limited to December 31, 2014.** If the SCA signals their intention to build a school, they will have until July 1, 2018 to commence construction on the project.

If SCA fails to exercise their option to build a school, NYU will be permitted to build the 100,000 sq.ft. building on the Bleecker site as approved by CPC. Under the modifications negotiated by Council Member Chin, **NYU will turn over a quarter of the building, or at least 25,000 sq. ft., for use as a community space for the Greenwich Village community.** NYU will pay for the build out of the Bleecker building and will outfit the space so it is move-in ready for community groups. Space in the Bleecker Street building will be provided to community groups at a rent that ensures NYU does not make a profit.

As a result of the City Council public hearing on this application, it was clear that NYU has thus far failed in its obligations to maintain its public open space.

Several **immediate improvements** will be made to public park strips on the superblocks, including: wayfinding and signage for the Sasaki Garden, the advance of several projects include a new seating area on Bleecker Street and a playground on Mercer Street, as well as funds for the LMNOP playground provided by NYU. A full list of immediate improvements is below.

NYU will commit to give **6,000 sq. ft. in Washington Square Village 4**, at the corner of Bleecker and Mercer Streets to a community-based organization at an affordable rent. NYU will also outfit this space for the group's programming needs.

This is in addition to **7,500 sq. ft. in the Zipper**, which will be set aside for community use for an indoor atrium and community programming. The indoor atrium will be open to the public year round, and will be accessed from the "Greene Street Walkway," which will be a new public amenity connecting Bleecker Street to Houston Street in Soho. This walkway will activate the space between the Zipper building and Silver Towers on the south superblock, and will feature cafes, restaurants, and outdoor seating areas.

To ensure that open space on the superblocks is maintained and preserved, Council Member Chin has secured a commitment from the Department of Parks and Recreation and New York University to enter into a **Maintenance and Operation Agreement (M&O) for the care of the**

Mercer and LaGuardia park strips, and the Bleecker seating area. This M&O will include a letter of credit valued at 150 percent of the estimate cost of care for the City-owned property on the superblocks. The Parks Department will be able to draw from this letter of credit for the maintenance and upkeep of up this public land. **The University will also establish a \$150,000 annual endowment for upkeep and maintenance of the private open space on the sites.** As part of the agreement, Council Member Chin has insisted that NYU and the City agree that the public and private open space be maintained at an equal quality and standard.

Council Member Chin has modified and expanded the “Open Space Oversight Organization,” (OSOO) as approved by CPC, which will consist of representatives from the New York City Council, Community Board 2, Manhattan Borough President, Manhattan Borough Commissioner of the Parks Department and NYU. Major modifications include: expanding the power of OSOO to include oversight of public land; subjecting maintenance of public land to independent monitoring; and requiring the OSOO be established by the end of 2012.

A full list of modifications is included below.

##

City Council Modifications 7/17/2012

Density Reduction on North and South Superblocks

***Council action is in addition to modifications approved by the City Planning Commission*

North Superblock

- ***A reduction of 142,000 square feet, or 44 percent, of above grade space on the north superblock.***
- Mercer St. building reduced by 121,000 square feet, or 63.7 percent.
 - *Final: 69,000 sq. ft. (Post CPC: 190,000 sq. ft.)*
 - *11 stories to four stories (68 feet tall)*
- Eight-story LaGuardia St. building reduced by 21,000 sq. ft., or 15.6 percent.
 - *Final: 114,000 sq. ft. (Post CPC: 135,000 sq. ft.)*
- Footprint of the Mercer St. building reduced by 3, 210 sq. ft. in order to create more space between Washington Square Village and the Mercer St. building, and make open space more accessible.
- Footprint of the LaGuardia St. building reduced by 4, 360 sq. ft. in order to create more space between Washington Square Village and the LaGuardia St. building.

South Superblock

- ***A reduction of 70,000 square feet, or 9 percent, of above grade space in the Zipper Building.***

- Reduction in height from 14 to five stories, for a total of 50,000 sq.ft, in the Zipper Building at the corner of Bleecker and Mercer Sts. to protect residential buildings on the east side of Mercer St.
- The Zipper building will be redesigned so that the bulk on the upper floors is pushed towards Houston Street and away from towers fronting Mercer and Bleecker Streets.

Bleecker Street Building

- Under the modified plan, the School Construction Authority (SCA) will retain the option to build a school on the former Morton Williams Supermarket site.
 - The SCA will have until December 31, 2014 to “say yes” or opt-in to building a school on the Bleecker Street site.
 - The SCA will then have until July 1, 2018 to begin construction on the proposed school.
 - If the SCA fails to begin construction, the site reverts to NYU control. Under NYU’s application certified by CPC, SCA had the option of building a school through 2025, at which point the site reverted to NYU control.
- Under the modified plan, NYU will commit to ***building the core, shell, and outfitting*** of the 100,000 sq. ft. Bleecker Building and will commit to preserving no less than 25,000 sq. ft. in the building for use by community groups.
- Space in the Bleecker Street building will be provided to community groups at a rent that ensures NYU does not make a profit.

Immediate upgrades to existing open space

- To address community concerns about the difficulty in accessing current public open space, NYU has committed to the following immediate improvements on the superblocks:
 - Signage for the Sasaki Garden to increase public awareness of the garden
 - Continue to allow community members to apply for paid access to the Coles gym and continue this arrangement for the new gym to be built in the Zipper building
 - Advance the timetable for building the LaGuardia Temporary Play Area on the north superblock
 - Advance the timetable for building a new seating area along Bleecker Street on the south superblock
 - Support local community groups in improving the conditions on LMNOP playground on the north superblock

Preservation of Open Space

- Due to the community's concern about NYU's ability to maintain its public spaces, the University commits to:
 - Enter into a Maintenance and Operation (M&O) agreement for care of the public land on the superblocs with the Department of Parks and Recreation
 - Create an endowment that will generate an annual \$150,000 maintenance fund paid for by New York University for the permanent upkeep and maintenance of private open spaces on the superblocs
 - Post a letter of credit with the Parks Department relating to the maintenance of the new public open spaces to be constructed on City property adjacent to the NYU property on the superblocs.
 - Maintain the City-owned public strips and NYU-owned private land at the same standard and quality

- Modification of "Open Space Oversight Organization" (OSOO) approved by CPC to include oversight of *existing*, as well as future open spaces.
 - Commitment to establish OSOO by the end of calendar year 2012.
 - Allow OSOO oversight of publically-owned park strips, and include maintenance of public land in compliance reports provided to City Planning Commission.
 - Add City Council representative to 'Gardens Task Force,' which will consider relocation of LaGuardia Corner Gardens.

- Shrinking of Mercer and LaGuardia building footprints to make open space more accessible. This will allow for a minimum 61.3-foot entrance into the interior open space, which is greater than five traffic lanes, and a maximum 77.7-foot entryway.
 - Distance between Washington Square Village 1 (WSV1) and LaGuardia building increased from 67.9 ft. to **76.0 ft.** (northwest corner).
 - Distance between WSV2 and Mercer building increased from 60.0 ft. to **61.3 ft.** (northeast corner).
 - Distance between WSV3 and LaGuardia building increased from 60.0 ft. to **62.1 ft.** (southwest corner).
 - Distance between WV4 and Mercer building increased from 68.9 ft. to **77.7 ft.** (southeast corner).

- Binding agreement from New York University *never* to build on the Cogen strip between West 3rd and West 4th Street. The Cogen strip will now be a privately owned public park.

Community Amenities

- Within the next year, NYU will make 6,000 sq. ft. of space available in Washington Square Village IV for community-oriented use (corner of Bleecker and Mercer Street).
- 7,500 sq. feet in the Zipper building devoted to public atrium and community usage

Other Issues

- NYU will not lease space on the superblocs to tenants that will operate a nightclub, or allow tenants to accept a cabaret license, or apply or accept, a beer, wine, or liquor license, apart from the use of space as a *bona fide* “restaurant.”