



May 2021

Morningside Heights Planning Study

A Report of the Morningside Heights Community Coalition,
Council Member Mark Levine, Borough President Gale
Brewer, Manhattan Community Board 9, and the City
Council Land Use Division



Morningside Heights is a community that, like many, wants a seat at the table to plan its own future.

This diverse uptown community - home to longtime co-ops and rent-regulated walk-up residents, NYCHA residents, and students and professionals affiliated with its many institutions - have watched for decades as it became an island of vulnerability. All around it, other neighborhoods were being rezoned to provide a sensible framework for development and preservation, but not in Morningside Heights.

The community became increasingly anxious that they may fall victim to what was happening to other communities that were not keeping up with zoning changes around the city: influx of tall luxury developments and no protections for the people who have lived in the community for decades. Under their current zoning, projects in Morningside Heights did not have to include any affordable units. These fears have been realized in the last few years, as new luxury developments with no affordable units have pierced the skyline.

In 2016, representatives of the community - a grassroots organization known as the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC) - decided that they needed to do something drastic to save the historic and social character of the neighborhood.

MHCC quickly realized that other rezoning efforts around the city had grown increasingly contentious and difficult for communities and the City (through the Department of City Planning) to come to agreement on. They needed to find a “new path” for neighborhood rezoning processes, one that allows the city to work with a community that is open to growth and increase in density in tandem with common sense restrictions and was in line with the values and vision of the community.

MHCC began to cultivate a vision for their neighborhood that centered on protecting vulnerable tenants from displacement, creating new affordable housing to maintain the socioeconomic diversity of the neighborhood as it grows, and modest preservation of the neighborhood’s context on residential streets.

The Coalition took upon itself the task of identifying areas of the neighborhood for transit-accessible affordable housing development, buildings with rent-stabilized tenants at risk of displacement, and sites vulnerable to out-of-context redevelopment. After undergoing a multi-faceted review process, they identified a 15-block stretch (between 110th to 125th Streets) with twenty sites spanning from Riverside Park to Morningside Park that were vulnerable to luxury development without affordability requirements because of unused air rights or high vacancy rates.

With their focus identified, MHCC began a grassroots effort to work alongside community stakeholders to develop those ideas further, engaging with neighborhood stakeholders through a series of working group meetings, briefings, and stakeholder meetings.

MHCC also sought out local elected assistance to help develop a strategy for a truly community-led rezoning model. Over the past two years, MHCC has worked closely and received resources from Council Member Mark Levine, City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and the land use team at the City Council, as well as Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, to develop a block-by-block vision for their plan that could add well over 1,000 new units as well as protect countless more.

They also embarked on a process that has been designed to culminate in a rezoning application led by The City Council, the Borough President, and Community Board 9, instead of by a City agency – which in itself would be an unprecedented action, conferring unusual power to the community. But beyond that, and perhaps more importantly, this has been a truly community-led planning study. In Morningside Heights, residents and stakeholders themselves conceptualized the opportunity, led years of community engagement, and brought forward a draft zoning framework.

This study is a result of that work. The recommendations it puts forth are not a panacea for all the challenges Morningside Heights faces, but they are a start. We hope this study can serve as an instrument to facilitate further input from community residents and provide an opportunity for all members of the Morningside community to participate in this process.

Sincerely,



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President, Morningside Heights Community Coalition



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This report will be available in digital format on the websites of MHCC, the City Council Land Use Division, Borough President Brewer, and Manhattan CB9.

Contents

Background and Existing Conditions	2
About the Neighborhood	2
Zoning	4
Land Use	5
Community Engagement	9
Engagement 2016-2021	10
Analysis: Distilling Issues That Can Be Addressed Through Rezoning	15
Planning Framework	19
Protecting Rent-Stabilized Housing	20
Producing New Affordable Housing	23
Preserving Contextual Neighborhood Character	29
Expanding Commercial Options	30
Summary of Proposed Zoning Changes	31
Application Process and Environmental Review	32
Next Steps	34
Appendix	37

Background and Existing Conditions



About the Neighborhood

Geography

The study area encompasses approximately 35 blocks in Morningside Heights. It is primarily located in Manhattan's Community District (CD) 9, but three of its blocks below W. 110th Street are in CD 7.

The neighborhood is located on the west side of Manhattan adjacent to the Hudson River. To its west is Riverside Park and the Hudson River; to its north is Manhattanville and West Harlem/Hamilton Heights; to its east are Morningside Park with West and Central Harlem beyond; and to its south is the Upper West Side.

The neighborhood sits atop a hill that rises sharply to the east and west, with steep inclines in Riverside and Morningside Parks, and more gradual inclines to the north and south. The elevated geography provides views of the Hudson River and Riverside and Morningside Parks for occupants of upper floors.

The NYCT 1 train line travels along Broadway, with three stops in the neighborhood, at W. 110th, W. 116th, and W. 125th Streets. 125th Street is an elevated station.

Socioeconomic Indicators

Incomes in Community District 9 are modest, with numerous socioeconomic indicators well below citywide averages for the CD9 community (all data in this section comes from the 2014-2018 5-year American Community Survey):

- Median household income 20% below citywide median
- Per capita income 17% below citywide average
- 30.5% of households earning less than \$25,000 annually (24.4% citywide)
- 50.6% earn less than \$50,000 (43.1% citywide)
- 86.1% renters (67.3% citywide)
- 30.5% of renters are severely rent-burdened, paying more than 50% of income for rent (29% citywide)

At a more local scale, the northernmost part of the rezoning area (the Census Tracts encompassing the area west of Amsterdam Ave between W. 122nd

Street and W. 125th Street), most closely reflects the racial and ethnic demographics of New York City, with a substantially higher percentage of Hispanic residents, and a substantially lower percentage of White residents, compared to the rest of the Census Tracts that make up the rezoning area (including the small section south of W. 110th Street). Proportions of Black residents and Asian residents are higher in this part of the neighborhood as well. Economically, the median household income of \$40,300 is a third of the city's median and less than half of the median in the rest of the rezoning area.

In the southernmost part of the rezoning area, by contrast (the Census Tracts encompassing the area west of Amsterdam Avenue between W. 106th Street and W. 114th Street), the demographics skew far more White and higher income, with smaller proportions of Asian and Black residents than the Census Tracts that make up the rest of the rezoning area. The median household income of \$95,455 is more than double the northernmost part of the rezoning area and 57% higher than the citywide median.



Zoning

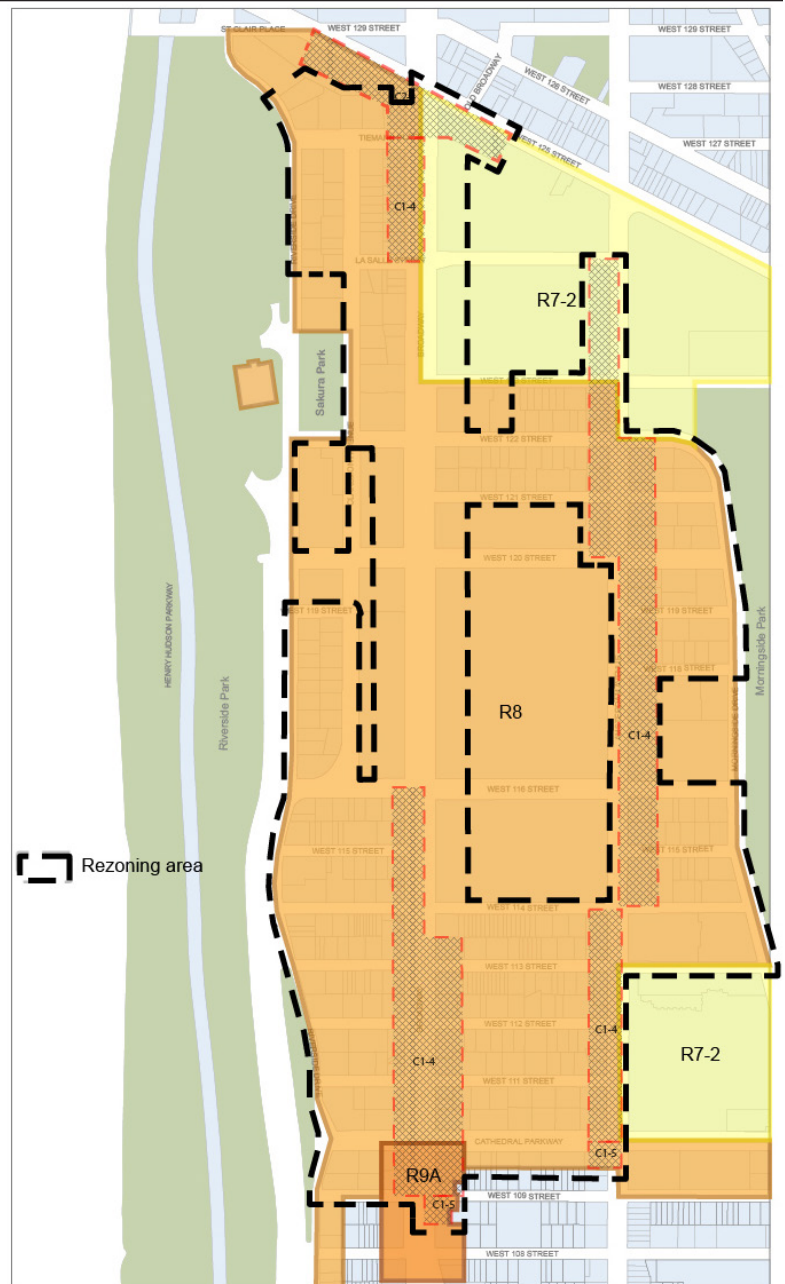
Existing zoning in Morningside Heights is almost entirely R8, with some R7-2 and R9A. All of these are residential districts which allow for residential and community facilities such as medical, religious, and educational (like dorms and university space) use.

Importantly, the R7-2 and R8 districts that make up the vast majority of the neighborhood do not include any limits on building height. Medium-density R7-2 districts allow a residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 3.44 on narrow streets, and 4.0 on wide streets; for a community facility, a 6.5 FAR is allowed.

Higher-density R8 districts allow a residential FAR of 6.02 on narrow streets, and 7.2 on wide streets; for any community facility, an FAR of 6.5 is allowed. And R9A allows a residential FAR of 7.52, with a height limit of 145 feet on wide streets like Broadway; for any community facility, an FAR of 7.5 is allowed.

The neighborhood is also mapped with commercial overlays along parts of Amsterdam and Broadway. These are primarily C1-4 overlays (with a couple blocks of C1-5) by W. 110th Street.

It is relevant to note that Riverside Drive up to 119th Street, Claremont Avenue, and most of 110th, 111th, and 112th streets was designated a historic district in 2017. The Morningside Heights Historic District Committee has filed a Request for Evaluation with the Landmarks Preservations Commission for an additional five areas to receive historic designation.



Existing zoning in Morningside Heights.

Land Use

The neighborhood is predominantly residential and institutional in use, with Columbia's main campus and other religious, educational, and medical institutional uses generally occupying the center of the neighborhood and rental, co-op, and condo residential uses surrounding them. Where residential buildings are present along Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway, they are primarily mixed-use, with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential above.

Residential

Morningside's residential rents are going up fast, and so are the values of properties. A few key indicators suggest that it is in the top tier of neighborhoods citywide for an accelerating housing market:

- Largest jump in rent prices in Manhattan from 2015-2016, at 4.1%; and from 2010-2018, at 34%
- Largest housing price appreciation of any neighborhood in the city
- Second-largest increase in net operating income in the city (19.4%)
- Among the city's highest rates in turnover of rent-stabilized units (17% per year) from 2010-2015

The residential real estate market here is heavily influenced by Columbia University and the property ownership of large institutions. As of 2018, Columbia and its affiliated institutions owned an estimated two-thirds of properties in the neighborhood, many of which are residential properties. Anecdotally, Columbia's recent Manhattanville campus expansion has also driven more neighborhood change and pressure on the area's housing stock.

Higher-income housing has been built in the neighborhood in recent years, exemplified by very tall luxury towers



Background and Existing Conditions

built on institutions' properties, like The Enclave, The Vandewater, and the under-construction tower on the Union Theological Seminary campus.

The neighborhood's northern section, roughly west of Amsterdam Avenue and north of W. 122nd Street,

includes dense clusters of rent-stabilized housing in a historically lower-income area. Northern Morningside Heights now and historically has had more affordable housing stock compared to the rest of the neighborhood due to its relative distance from subway stations.



Contextual neighborhood character clockwise from top left: W. 121st Street b/t Amsterdam and Broadway; W. 111th Street b/t Amsterdam and Broadway; SW corner of Broadway and Tiemann; W. 119th Street b/t Amsterdam and Broadway.

Right: Out-of-context new luxury towers at the Enclave at 113th Street (left) and in the background at the Vandewater on the JTS campus.



Commercial

Along Amsterdam Avenue and Broadway mixed-use buildings with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential above are typical. This pattern is most consistent on both sides of Broadway between the southern boundary of the rezoning area at W. 108th Street and W. 114th Street, and continuing on the west side of Broadway north until W. 116th Street.

Other major clusters of this typology exist on the west side of Broadway between La Salle Street and the block north of Tiemann Place; the west side of Amsterdam Avenue between W. 121st Street and La Salle Street; the east side of Amsterdam Avenue between W. 119th Street and the block north of W. 121st Street; and the west side of Amsterdam Avenue where uses include small retail, restaurants and cafes, and bars.

Although both avenues have active commercial storefronts and vibrant pedestrian environments, both also present three key issues: disconnected corridors, limited allowable uses, and empty storefronts.

The disconnect in corridors generally occurs where institutional or parking uses puncture the continuity of the pedestrian corridor. The most striking example of this is on the east side of Broadway between W. 122nd Street and W. 125th Street, where the Jewish Theological Seminary campus, the parking garage of the Morningside Gardens co-op complex, and the NYCHA Grant Houses

campus all present lengthy blank walls or fences to the sidewalk. This results in a long stretch of uninviting and sparsely used sidewalk.

Other areas where commercial corridors are interrupted or disconnected include the west side of Broadway between W. 116th Street and W. 123rd Street (primarily fronting the Barnard College campus) and both sides of Amsterdam Avenue between W. 116th Street and W. 118th Street (where the condition is amplified by the presence of an overhead pedestrian plaza that does not connect down to the sidewalk). Though there are no commercial uses present, these instances don't suffer from the same scarcity of pedestrian use as the Broadway corridor described above because they serve as central connectors between Columbia's academic and residential buildings.

The C1-4 (and C1-5) zoning of these commercial corridors prohibits anything other than small local establishments that are visited on a day-to-day basis. Uses such as theaters, bike repair shops, small amusements like billiards or bowling, and art studios, for example, are not presently allowed. This limits options for business owners and makes successful commercial corridors more difficult to maintain in the neighborhood.



Disconnected pedestrian corridor on the east side of Broadway near 123rd Street (left); and local retail businesses on Amsterdam Ave. at 121st Street.



Institutional

Morningside Heights is uniquely rich in institutional uses, including the main academic campus of Columbia University along with:

- Union and Jewish Theological Seminaries
- Barnard College
- Teacher's College
- Riverside Church
- St. John the Divine Cathedral
- Mt. Sinai's St. Luke's-Roosevelt hospital
- Manhattan School of Music

The map at right also indicates the location of Columbia-owned residential buildings, which make up a significant portion of the neighborhood's housing stock.



Institutional ownership in the neighborhood. Data from PLUTO.

Community Engagement



The ongoing campaign to rezone Morningside Heights, begun in 2016 and continuing to the present, has engaged with community and stakeholders through community activities, social media, and many meetings with the Department of City Planning officials and the City Council Land Use Division, all with the sponsorship and guidance of Council Member Mark Levine and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, along with support from New York State representatives Daniel O'Donnell and Brian Benjamin. (See Timeline of Rezoning Activities and Events.)

The overall objectives for rezoning have evolved through ongoing discussions and meetings with community members and key stakeholders:

- Preserve hundreds of rent-stabilized units
- Promote new affordable housing
- Modernize outdated zoning and restrain out-of-context luxury towers using contextual residential zoning districts
- Foster greater small business activity and opportunities through commercial zoning designation
- Preserve the unique character of Morningside Heights
- Develop a community-led plan that addresses the needs of the broad range of people who live in Morningside Heights
- Create a model for other communities to develop their own plans

The Morningside Heights Community Coalition's (MHCC) process of engagement is laid out below. Many of the reports and publications referenced here are available in Appendix II for reference.

It is important to note that this process and this partnership among community stakeholders represents a departure from how City-led rezonings have worked in the past. Neighborhood rezonings around the city have met with tons of resistance from communities that feel they were not consulted, informed, or listened to. We felt there was a better way: embracing the ideas of community members and utilizing elected officials to support and guide – instead of dictate – the process. It has been a truly community-led process, and we believe this difference matters.

The recommendations put forward here are not a solution to all of the challenges in the community. They stick to what can be accomplished through the community's simple, core vision: rezoning. We hope the identification of issues that can be addressed through rezoning and the proposed rezoning framework that follows can serve to facilitate further conversation and participation from the Morningside community as we continue to work toward the vision of a neighborhood with more affordable housing, less risk of displacement, and fewer grossly out-of-context luxury towers.



Engagement 2016-2021

2016

MHCC was formed in 2016 in response to neighborhood concern over increasing development of all luxury towers in Morningside Heights, and the potential displacement of residents. In that first year, the group took five substantial first steps:

1. Developed and disseminated a Platform on Residential Development in Morningside Heights, setting forth seven principles for growth in the neighborhood, including:
 - a. Height consistent with nearby buildings
 - b. Exteriors harmonize with surrounding buildings
 - c. Views of nearby landmarks preserved
 - d. Mitigate the impact on the environment and local services
 - e. Provide affordable housing
 - f. Support local social and economic development; and
 - g. Rezoning Morningside Heights
2. Held a community meeting on June 20th, at which the group reviewed its Platform on Residential Development in Morningside Heights and discussed

the implications and consequences of development at sites in the neighborhood.

3. Developed and issued a comprehensive and detailed survey of over twenty sites where additional high-density development could potentially occur (the "Soft Site" report). The report identified 23 sites with the potential for significant development that may not be aligned with the Platform on Residential Development's seven principles for growth. The report showed how properties such as empty lots, low-rise structures, and vacant buildings, could be vulnerable to out-of-context development.
4. Held a second community meeting on September 19th, at which the group presented its "Soft Site" report.

Two committees – Action and Zoning – were formed to carry out the work of the Coalition. The committees continued to meet regularly, with 20-40 people at each session. They also soon began preparations to host and facilitate a participatory workshop about some of the issues that were being raised. The Zoning Committee developed and issued "Guidelines and Principles" to convey the optimal community goals for a rezoning plan.

5. Community Board 9 issued a resolution reiterating a call for rezoning Morningside Heights.

2017

In 2017, along with continuing to conduct community outreach, MHCC began speaking with staff from DCP about their concept for a rezoning plan.

Some key accomplishments in MHCC's 2017 engagement work included:

1. Held neighborhood meetings with DCP officials to explore a potential rezoning of Morningside Heights. Later in the year, Council Member Mark Levine and staff arranged meetings with DCP and MHCC to explore what those rezoning options could look like.
2. Held a "Visionary" Workshop Town Hall with over 150 participants, providing them the opportunity to discuss their concerns and goals for the community. Discussion topics were based on the "Guidelines and Principles" document created the year before (see Appendix IV). Council Member Mark Levine, Borough President Gale Brewer, and State Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell addressed the audience during the Town Hall.
3. Shortly after, the group produced "Morningside Speaks!," a report documenting the Town Hall Workshop, and issued it to all MHCC members, elected officials, and to DCP.
4. MHCC's Zoning Sub-committee developed a draft of a proposed rezoning plan for Morningside Heights. Also in 2017, MHCC published an OP-ED in CityLimits calling for the rezoning.
5. Met with the President of Savanna, the developer of the Vandewater luxury residential tower, to request inclusion of affordable units in the planned tower. The request was rejected, and later in the year, the group issued a zoning challenge to the developer, produced by urban planner George Janes, and which was supported by all local elected officials. The challenge was rejected by the Department of Buildings.

MHCC also held a rally at the Jewish Theological



Residents rally outside Jewish Theological Seminary.

Seminary site to protest development of the Vandewater tower, and to promote rezoning of Morningside Heights. Speakers included then-Public Advocate (now Attorney General) Letitia James, Borough President Brewer, and State Assembly Member O'Donnell.

2018

In 2018, MHCC put forward their Zoning Committee's specific proposed zoning designations that made up the draft rezoning framework. The proposal was presented by Community Board 9 Chair Barry Weinberg at an MHCC Town Hall attended by 175 residents, along with Council Member Levine, State Senator Brian Benjamin, State Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell, and Borough President Brewer.

Other key accomplishments for MHCC in 2018 included:

1. Continued advocacy for a rezoning with DCP. MHCC sent a petition to DCP and local elected officials with 1,000 signatures collected from community residents to support rezoning. Additionally, MHCC members sent letters to DCP supporting rezoning.
2. Council Member Levine and staff arrange meetings with MHCC and DCP to discuss possible allocation of resources to develop a formal rezoning plan. Communications are with top DCP officials, including Chair Marisa Lago.



MHCC's 2018 Town Hall. Clockwise from top left: residents share their thoughts; CB9 Chair Barry Weinberg; CM Mark Levine; and BP Gale Brewer addressing the crowd.

3. Published an Op-Ed in "Urban Matters," a publication of the New School, calling for rezoning.

2019

In 2019 MHCC continued conversations with DCP about their rezoning proposal. This was the year that land use teams at the City Council and the Borough President's offices became more closely involved with the rezoning proposal, helping MHCC formalize their rezoning framework and engagement process.

Key moments included:

1. In the winter, MHCC and Council Member Mark Levine led a walking tour of Morningside Heights with Borough President Brewer and City Planning Commission (CPC) Chair Marisa Lago and DCP staff. Throughout the spring, MHCC, Council Member Levine, and staff from the Council's Land Use Division continue speaking with DCP about a potential rezoning application.

2. On September 19, CPC Chair Marisa Lago issued a letter to MHCC, Council Member Levine, and Borough President Brewer informing them that DCP resources would not be allocated to rezone Morningside Heights.

At the MHCC Town Hall meeting that night, invited guest Council Speaker Corey Johnson announced that Mayor de Blasio had "rescinded the letter" and that the City Council would allocate the resources required to move forward with environmental review and a land use application for the rezoning of Morningside Heights. Council Member Levine was identified as the sponsor of the plan who would guide the process toward approval by City Council. The plan was co-sponsored by Borough President Brewer.

3. In the fall, MHCC and the City Council Land Use Division, together with Council Member Levine and Borough President Brewer and their staffs, developed an initial draft planning framework as part of a continued community engagement process.

This included the formation of a working group that incorporated CB7 leadership, staff of Assembly Member O'Donnell and Senator Benjamin, and Morningside Gardens tenant leadership, to present and review the rezoning framework and collect feedback. The working group met several times in late 2019 and early 2020 to discuss and iterate on various aspects of the draft framework, including aligning on goals and objectives, developing concepts and geographies for updated zoning districts, and analyzing potential implications of zoning changes for stakeholders and residents.

4. In December, MHCC released its Empty Storefronts and Community Needs Survey Report, which highlighted the need for more diverse retail in the neighborhood.

2020

2020 started strong with the continued work of the working group and significant progress in conversations with DCP. The latter part of the year represented a setback in MHCC's progress toward rezoning, as the COVID crisis put the city's funding resources for the rezoning on hold.

Highlights of the push toward rezoning in 2020 included:

1. In early 2020, the City Council Land Use Division continued to develop the rezoning plan with ongoing input from MHCC, the working group, and other community stakeholders. The Land Use Division led briefings for institutions including Mt. Sinai Morningside, Riverside Church, and Columbia University, as well as for community organizations including Goddard Riverside and P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Harlem, and for CB7 leadership, in which they presented the draft planning framework and solicited feedback.
2. Also in early 2020, the City Council Land Use Division issued a Request for Proposals to environmental consultants to develop and deliver a required Environmental Assessment Statement. Consultant-submitted bids were evaluated for the project.
3. As the COVID crisis raged, the city's funding resources were placed on hold. MHCC, the City Council Land



From top: Borough President Brewer advocates for affordable housing in Morningside Heights; Speaker Johnson and Council Member Levine discuss the rezoning; Speaker Johnson offers his support for the proposal.

Use Division, Council Member Levine, and Borough President Brewer continued to seek a path to move the project to completion and final approval by City Council.

4. In September, MHCC issued a survey of the Morningside Heights community. Rezoning of Morningside Heights was by far the most important issue. The need for creating and preserving affordable

housing, a primary goal of rezoning, was also among the top choices. The survey results confirmed the strong support for the ongoing community-led rezoning initiative by MHCC, and actively supported by resolution, engagement and continued advocacy by members and leaders of Community Board 9.

2021

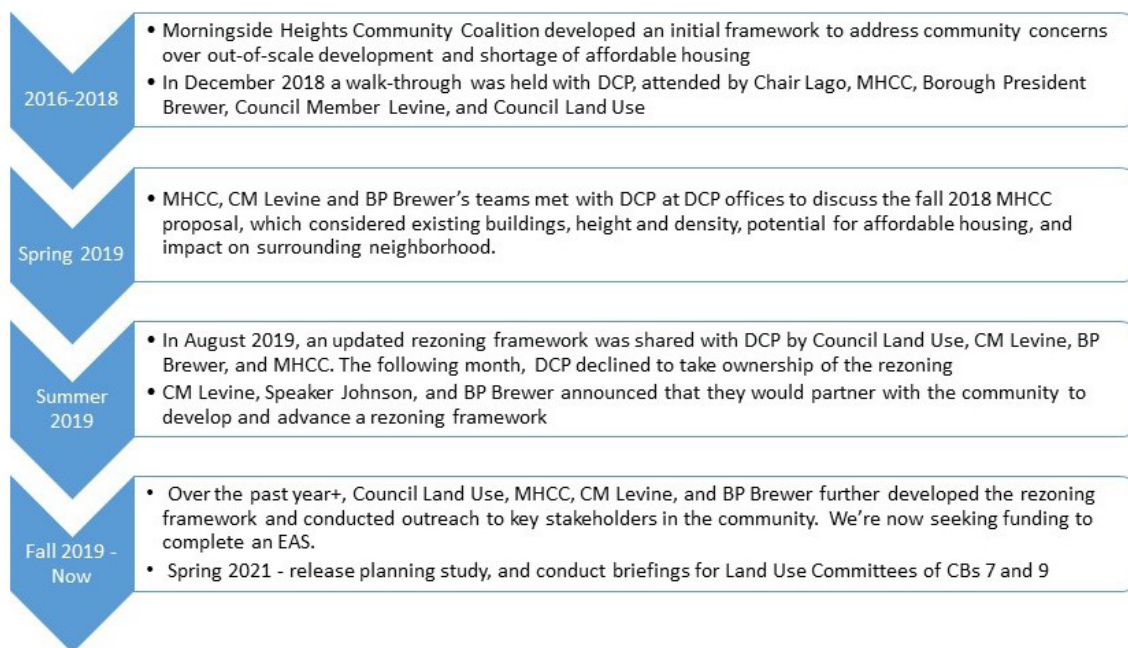
Despite the difficulties brought on by COVID-19 and the attendant challenges New York City is facing, MHCC and its partners continued to push forward toward a rezoning of Morningside Heights:

1. In early 2021, MHCC and CB9 coordinated with the Bond Center at City College to explore opportunities

for collaboration in completing environmental review for the rezoning, with the Bond Center and its partner Davis, Brody, Bond identifying the project as one that could contribute to their joint mission of spatial justice in upper Manhattan.

2. In March, MHCC members were interviewed by the Columbia Spectator, highlighting the need for affordable housing in Morningside Heights.
3. With no funding immediately available for completing an environmental review, MHCC along with its partners CB9, Borough President Gale Brewer, and Council Member Mark Levine moved forward with compiling its work in this planning study.

TIMELINE OF THIS REZONING PROPOSAL



Analysis: Distilling Issues That Can Be Addressed Through Rezoning

Morningside Heights remains a highly attractive zoning environment for luxury developers, prompting neighborhood residents to express their concerns about the ongoing displacement of long-time residents and small businesses in their rapidly gentrifying area. Increasing density is placing additional stress on infrastructure and services; school resources; and already overcrowded subway cars, stations, and platforms. Meanwhile, neighborhood tax rates are rising, long-time residents are being displaced, subways are more crowded and infrastructure is stressed.



The Morningside Heights community has expressed a strong preference that local government representatives and City agencies should work closely with the community to ensure the enactment and enforcement of updated zoning regulations. This is not a wishful neighborhood aspiration. The Morningside Heights community believes a rezoning plan should be supported and implemented by our local government and City agencies.

The following are issues that arose in the course of MHCC's community engagement process which have the potential to be addressed by rezoning.

Vulnerable Rent-stabilized Tenants

Residents in rent-stabilized units in Morningside Heights are experiencing increasing pressures. As market rents increase and the area becomes increasingly attractive to affluent residents, landlords can turn a handsome profit by de-regulating stabilized apartments and converting units or entire properties into luxury rentals

or condos. This practice has occurred in Morningside in both privately owned buildings and institutionally owned buildings, where property owners look to cater to higher-income students and other New Yorkers by offering upscale student buildings. While the rent stabilization laws were strengthened in 2019, the long-term value of market rate housing continues to place pressure on the existing building stock, and increases the risk of tenant harassment and displacement.

Outdated 1961 Zoning

Morningside Heights experiences challenges of 60-year-old zoning that did not foresee supertall luxury towers or zoning lot mergers, and does not limit height for new buildings. Zoning districts with no height limits allow developers to purchase large lots (or development rights from underbuilt adjacent lots) and build very tall towers. Moreover, the neighborhood's elevated geography gives residents of tall luxury towers views over Morningside and Riverside Parks and the Hudson River, making tall tower construction especially attractive.



A map of the rezoning area surrounded by other neighborhoods that have been rezoned with contextual zoning districts.

Unlike Morningside Heights, the surrounding neighborhoods of Manhattanville, West Harlem, and the Upper West Side have all had substantial mapping of contextual residential districts (see map above) that limit new building heights and ensure that any new development roughly matches the height and density of the existing neighborhood.

Recent residential luxury towers are striking examples of out-of-context development that, alarmingly, seem to be getting taller over time:

- 15-story "Enclave" towers on the campus of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine on W. 113th Street
- 32-story "Vandewater" tower on Jewish Theological

Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment

Prepared by:
The Morningside Heights Community Coalition
The Morningside Heights Historic District Committee
P.O. Box 250405, Columbia University Station
New York, N.Y. 10025

September 2016

MHCC: Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment
September 20, 2016

Seminary campus, nearing completion as of May 2021

- 42-story tower on Union Theological Seminary campus, planned to open in 2023 (bottom)

To understand where in the neighborhood properties were at risk of similar out-of-context development, in 2016 MHCC began mapping lots (see report above) that could be attractive for redevelopment into, "large towers inconsistent with the surrounding area, and... luxury rentals and condos beyond the affordability of our community." The report identified a handful of mid-block sites on residential streets that raised concern, as well as several properties near subway stations on Broadway that appeared more appropriate for large-scale affordable housing development.

Lack of Affordable Housing

Increasing housing costs in the neighborhood means increasing rent prices for residents in non-regulated units. But little to no new affordable housing has been built in the neighborhood in decades.

Valuing the preservation of the community's racial and socioeconomic diversity, MHCC developed a residential development framework for the neighborhood that

prioritized 30% affordable units in new residential buildings. In addition, recognizing the importance of making affordable housing transit-accessible, the Coalition began looking more closely at potential development sites for new affordable housing, narrowing in on several properties on Broadway near W. 125th Street and near W. 110th Street that had been identified in its 2016 report.



(1.) *TD Bank and American Apparel (VACANT) -- 2831

Broadway (NW corner 109th Street along Broadway)

Block 1893

Lot 43

Most recent recorded

deed: 4/27/2016 -- Party 1, TD

Bank and Party 2, The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh, but there is

also a 4/27/2016 deed to 2825 Broadway LLC (No further info found). Along with the adjacent Rite Aid site, this entire block, comprised of three one-story commercial sites, is at risk for overdevelopment.



(2.) *Rite Aid -- 2853 Broadway
(SW corner 110th Street)

Block 1893

Lot 50

(Note: Formerly Sloan's Supermarket -- property remained with Sloan family real estate ownership)

Most recent recorded

deed: 4/13/11 -- CKMR Corporation F/K/A Sloan's Supermarkets, Inc., 2 Bennet

MHCC: Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment 3

September 20, 2016

An excerpt of MHCC's 2016 Report on Sites Vulnerable to Overdevelopment

Commercial Development

The neighborhood also includes commercial corridors that, while vibrant, are disconnected from each other, resulting in a poor pedestrian environment in some locations. These gaps in commercial and pedestrian activity correspond with gaps in the C1-4 commercial overlays on Broadway and Amsterdam. Those overlays also limit the range of commercial uses that can operate within them, prohibiting businesses such as theaters, bike repair shops, small amusements like billiards or bowling, art studios, gyms, or yoga studios.

In response to local and citywide storefront vacancies, and to understand the demand for retail businesses in the neighborhood, in December 2019 MHCC compiled the Morningside Heights Neighborhood Empty Storefronts and Community Needs report. It found that residents would like to see services such as yoga, community meeting spaces, and a gym, as well as entertainment businesses like a movie theater, music venue, or live performance theater space.

Below and right: Excerpts from MHCC's 2020 Report on Commercial Storefront Vacancies in Morningside Heights.

Respondents were asked to rank types of services that they would like to see in Morningside Heights.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business	Ranking based on proportion of those respondents wanting the business who responded 3	Ranking based on weighted average of responses
Space for yoga, t'ai chi, or bodily movement classes	Urgent care center	Space for yoga, t'ai chi, or bodily movement classes
Community meeting space	Gym	Community meeting space
Senior center	Community meeting space	Urgent care center
Urgent care center	Space for yoga, t'ai chi, or bodily movement classes	Gym
Geriatric medical center or specialist	Senior center	Senior center
Gym	Geriatric medical center or specialist	Geriatric medical center or specialist
Afterschool childcare center	Afterschool childcare center	Afterschool childcare center
Co-working space (such as WeWork or Spacious)	Co-working space (such as WeWork or Spacious)	Co-working space (such as WeWork or Spacious)
Veterans services center	Veterans services center	Veterans services center
Meditation chapel or space	Meditation chapel or space	Meditation chapel or space

Respondents were asked to rank types of entertainment venues that they would like to see in Morningside Heights.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business	Ranking based on proportion of those respondents wanting the business who responded 3	Ranking based on weighted average of responses
Movie theater	Movie theater	Movie theater
Theater (drama)	Music locale	Music locale
Music locale	Theater (drama)	Theater (drama)

Planning Framework

Through an ongoing community engagement process, MHCC and its partners set out to encapsulate what a neighborhood with updated zoning could look like. The group began the process of identifying zoning changes that could better align with community-identified goals, especially relating to rent-stabilized housing, affordable housing production, and contextual height limits that reflect the built form of the neighborhood.

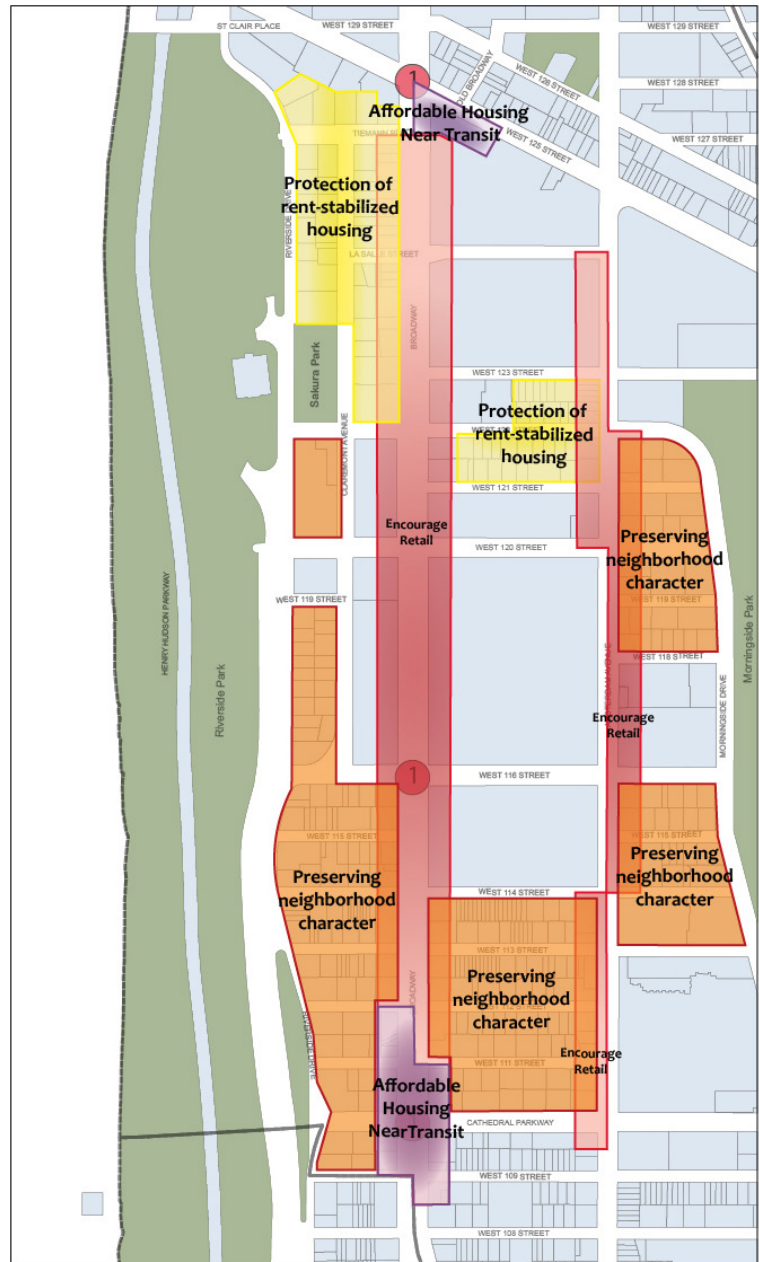
What follows is the outcome of that process. It is not necessarily a finished product, but we believe it is a thoughtful approach to zoning changes in the neighborhood that could accomplish meaningful positive outcomes.

Goals

The Morningside Heights Rezoning planning framework identifies four crucial goals:

- Protect rent-stabilized clusters
- Produce affordable housing near transit
- Preserve contextual neighborhood character
- Encourage retail on Broadway and Amsterdam

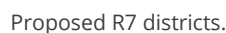
The map at right demonstrates the areas of emphasis for each of these goals.



A conceptual map of the goals of the rezoning.

To determine the geography of these clusters of rent-stabilized units, we used the following factors:

- In the clusters that met all of these criteria, we identified about 850 rent-stabilized units, with an average built FAR of 4.15. These clusters, concentrated in the northwestern part of the neighborhood and consisting primarily of 5-story walk-up apartment buildings, represent a significantly smaller built form than the rest of Morningside Heights.

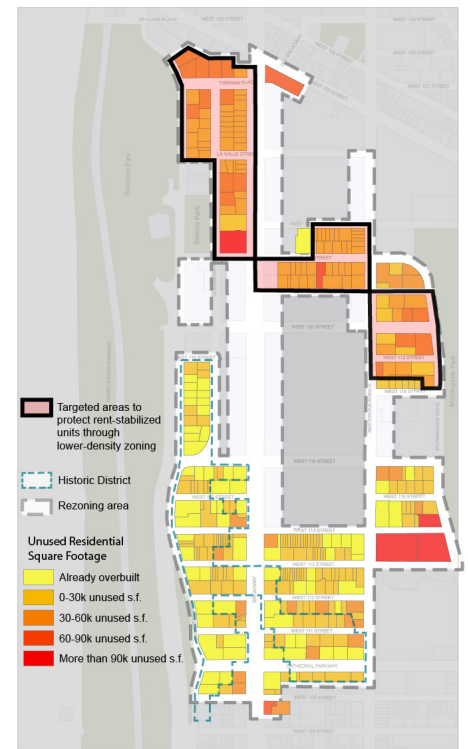




Areas with a concentration of rent-stabilized units.



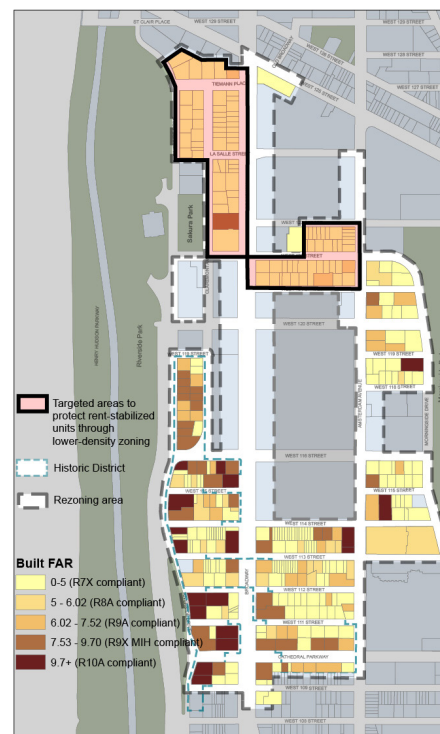
Areas with no existing regulatory measures that can help protect existing rent-stabilized buildings; and with substantial unbuilt allowable floor area.



Areas with substantial unbuilt allowable floor area.



Areas with substantial de-stabilization of units; and with low rates of non-compliance after rezoning.



Areas with low rates of non-compliance after rezoning.

Planning Framework

Today's R8 zoning has 7.2 residential FAR on wide streets, and 6.02 on narrow streets – both with no height limit. The difference between the built and allowable FAR could provide incentive for redevelopment of these mid-rise blocks. This makes rent-stabilized tenants living there vulnerable to harassment and displacement.

In considering proposed zoning districts to help preserve these rent-stabilized units, we looked at two primary options that more closely fit the existing built form while retaining some flexibility for building owners to make alterations or small additions:

R7D Zoning

- Residential FAR: 4.2
- Base Height 85' (8 stories); Max Height 105' (10 stories)
- Setback: 10' (wide) or 15' (narrow street)

R7X Zoning

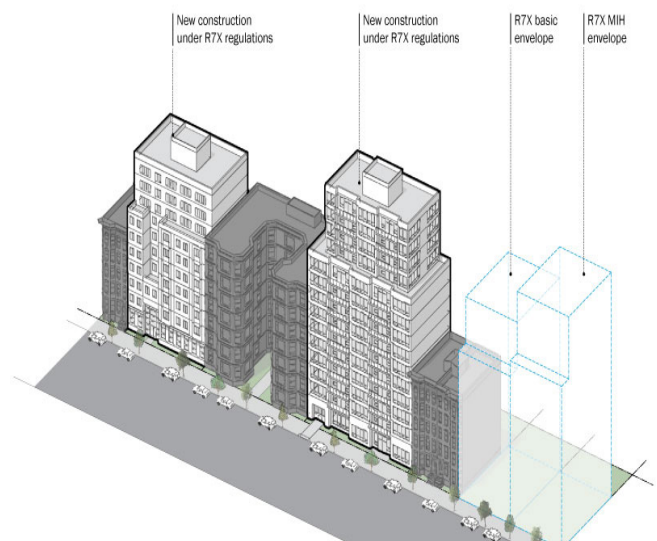
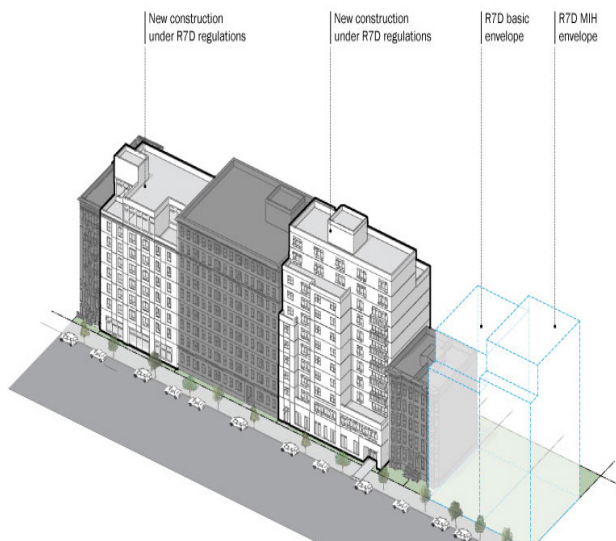
- Residential FAR: 5.0
- Base Height 95' (9 stories); Max Height 125' (12 stories)
- Setback: 10' (wide) or 15' (narrow street)

Ultimately, we propose using these two districts in a targeted way that responds to the existing built form and needs of specific blocks, mapping R7D on the two lowest-density blocks, and R7X on the 4 slightly higher-density blocks (see map at right).



Above: a detailed built FAR study of the proposed R7 blocks.

Below: Illustrations of R7D and R7X district buildings.



Producing New Affordable Housing

Objective: Increase supply of affordable housing near transit by mapping MIH. This may also provide opportunities for transit accessibility improvements at 110th and 125th Street subway stations.

Mandatory Inclusionary Housing provides an opportunity to require permanently affordable rental units in any new development on sites where the allowable density is significantly increased by a rezoning. As such, we looked for locations where additional density would be appropriate and desirable in order to grow the supply of affordable units in Morningside Heights.

Several underbuilt areas near 1 train stations at W. 110th Street and W. 125th Street represent such an opportunity to do so, and for these areas we propose increasing the zoning to high-density contextual districts that, taken together, could produce hundreds of new permanently affordable apartments.

We propose two different districts that increase density to produce affordable housing while maintaining contextual height limits:

- **R9A** increases residential FAR from 4 to 8.5 with MIH mapping and adds a 175' height cap. For community facilities, it increases community facility FAR from 6.5 to 7.5. At the southeast corner of Broadway and 125th Street, buildings would remain in context with surrounding buildings on the NYCHA Grant Houses campus. An R9A designation here is intended to increase density enough above the existing R7-2 to map MIH on the site.
- **R10A** increases residential FAR from 7.2 (R8) and 7.52 (R9A) (respectively) to 12 with MIH mapping,



Proposed zoning districts to produce new affordable housing.

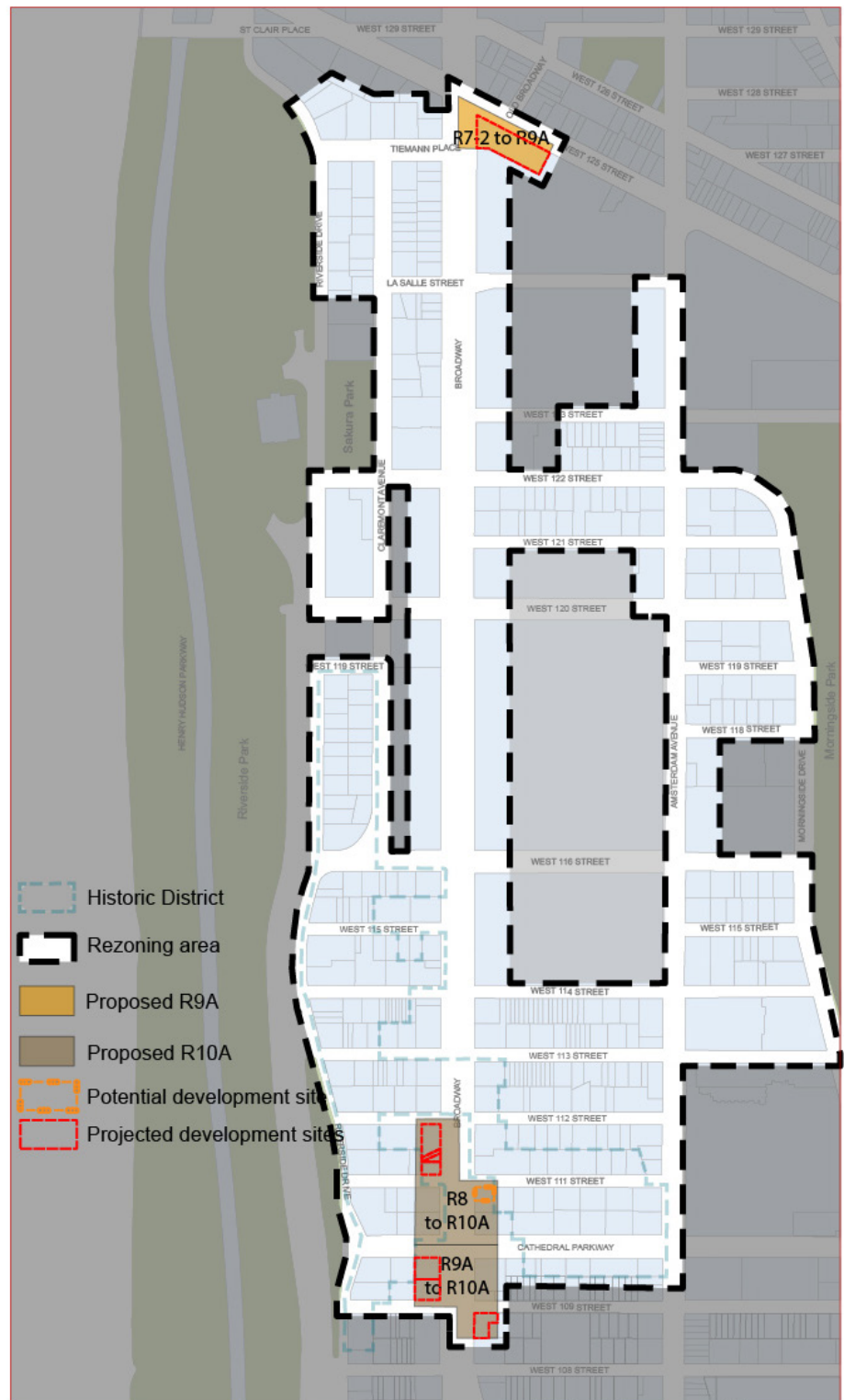
and adds a 230' height limit. Near the 110th Street subway station on Broadway, R10A would add density in a transit-rich location. An R9A designation here is intended to increase density enough above the existing R7-2 to map MIH on the site.

Projected Development Sites

As a result of this rezoning, we can reasonably anticipate new affordable housing development in the near-term on four sites around the neighborhood which, given their current low-density improvements and the available floor area available under the aforementioned rezoning, we anticipate would have a high probability of being redeveloped.

Some of these sites combine multiple lots with different owners, with the understanding that adjacent high-value development sites are frequently (though not always) combined and developed together.

The map at right shows those "projected development sites outlined in red. A site-by-site analysis follows.



Map of the projected development sites, outlined in red, that are explained in more detail on the following pages.

Projected Development Site 1

568 W. 125th St.

Currently, this site is occupied by a 1-story building built to 0.9 FAR. Built in 1957, it is occupied by various retail establishments (like Duane Reade). It is owned by Jay Irgang.

Under the proposed R9A zoning with MIH, the site could be built out to 8.5 FAR and 17 stories, with up to 272,425 square feet of floor area, including ground floor retail.

Redevelopment on this site could produce an estimated 353 residential units (approximately 88 affordable units), compared to the 141 units (0 affordable) that could presently be built.



Projected Development Site 2

2861-2871 Broadway

This site currently consists of four buildings of 2-3 stories and 3-4 FAR, built in the period 1912-1940. They are occupied by restaurants and retail, with some residential at 2871 Broadway. The buildings are owned by various LLCs.

Under the proposed R10A zoning with MIH, the site could be built out to 12 FAR and 23 stories, with up to 181,476 square feet of floor area, including ground floor retail.

Redevelopment on this site could produce an estimated 245 residential units (approximately 61 affordable units), compared to the 138 units (0 affordable) that could presently be built.



Projected Development Site 3

2825-2835 Broadway

Currently, two 1-story, approximately 1 FAR buildings built in 1935 and 1960, respectively, sit on this site. The buildings are presently occupied by TD Bank and CVS, and owned by 2825 Broadway LLC and 2833-2839 Broadway LLC.

Under the proposed R10A zoning with MIH, the site could be built out to 12 FAR and 23 stories, with up to 206,196 square feet of floor area, including ground floor retail.

Redevelopment on this site could produce an estimated 278 residential units (approximately 70 affordable units), compared to the 190 units (0 affordable) that could presently be built.



Projected Development Site 4

2810 Broadway

Currently, this site consists of a 1-story, 0.8 FAR building built in 1920. The building is occupied by a handful of retail units, including Santander and Popular banks, owned by 2810 Broadway LLC.

Under the proposed R10A zoning with MIH, the site could be built out to 12 FAR and 23 stories, with up to 112,000 square feet of floor area, including ground floor retail.

Redevelopment on this site could produce an estimated 150 residential units (approximately 38 affordable units), compared to the 102 units (0 affordable) that could presently be built.



Understanding the Trade-offs of MIH vs VIH at 2810 and 2825 Broadway

2810 and 2825-2835 Broadway, in Community Board 7 on the southeast corner of W. 109th Street and the west side between W. 109th and W. 110th Streets, respectively, present a crucial opportunity to generate affordable housing. Both are currently zoned R9A and are occupied by single-story buildings, leaving ample potential for these sites to act as new hubs of affordability on the Upper West Side while remaining consistent with the character of the neighborhood. If rezoned to R10A both sites would have to comply with Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) requirements. These two sites would account for approximately 42% of all affordable units resulting from the proposed rezoning.

The sites were rezoned to R9A in 2007 with the hopes that they would be developed under the Voluntary Inclusionary Housing (VIH) Program. The affordability targets in the VIH program are negotiated between the developer and HPD on a site-by-site basis, though HPD has indicated that the most common affordability target is 20% of units affordable at 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). However, after 13 years, both sites have remained one-story commercial buildings, with no projected interests in redevelopment under the current R9A zoning, even though these are prime redevelopment sites adjacent to a subway station. This disparity signals a need to change the zoning and the possibility of creating affordable housing through MIH.

Upzoning these sites to R10A would trigger the MIH requirement, including MIH Option 1 which requires 25% of units to be affordable at 60% AMI. As outlined below, the difference in affordable housing development under the current R9A and VIH designations, compared to the proposed R10A and MIH, is 45 units, or an increase of 113%.

2810 Broadway

The site sits on the southeast corner of Broadway and W. 109th Street, and currently contains a one-story building with multiple commercial uses.

The site's current zoning is R9A, which under VIH would allow for an FAR of 8.5. This amounts to a total of roughly 79,000 buildable square feet, with a height limit of 170 feet. Under the minimum dwelling unit size required by zoning (680 square feet), 102 residential units could be developed. However, based on an assumed average unit size of 1,000 square feet, which is closer to what is customarily built, the development would yield 70 units. Under VIH, the most common affordability breakdown is 20% of units, which would be restricted to households and individuals earning 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) (\$63,680 annual income for an individual, or \$90,960 for a family of four). Approximately 14 affordable units could be developed under VIH. To incorporate Mandatory Inclusionary Housing on the site, an upzoning to R10A would be required. Under R10A, an allowed FAR of 12 would amount to roughly 111,500 buildable square feet, with a height limit of 230 feet. Under the minimum dwelling unit size required by zoning 150 residential units could be developed. However, based on an assumed average unit size of 1,000 square feet, the development would yield 102 units. Under MIH Option 1, 25 percent of units would be affordable, or 38 units, averaging 60% AMI (\$47,760 annual income for an individual, or \$68,220 for a family of four).

	R9A - No VIH	R9A - VIH	R10A - MIH
Max Height	135'	170'	230'
Total Units	51	70	102
Affordable Units	0	14	26
AMI Level	N/A	80%	60%

2825-2835 Broadway

The site sits on the west side of Broadway between W. 109th and W. 110th Streets, and currently comprises of two one-story buildings containing a TD Bank and a CVS Pharmacy.

The site's current zoning is R9A, which under the VIH would allow for an FAR of 8.5. This amounts to a total of roughly 146,000 buildable square feet, with a height limit of 170 feet. Under the minimum dwelling unit size required by zoning (680 square feet), 190 residential units could be developed. However, based on an assumed average unit size of 1,000 square feet which is closer to what is customarily built, the development would yield 129 units. Under VIH, the most common affordability breakdown is 20 percent of units at 80 percent of AMI (\$63,680 annual income for an individual, or \$90,960 for a family of four), or a predicted 26 affordable units. To incorporate Mandatory Inclusionary Housing on the site,

an upzoning to R10A would be required. Under R10A, an allowed FAR of 12 would amount to roughly 206,000 buildable square feet, with a height limit of 230 feet. Under the minimum dwelling unit size required by zoning, 278 residential units could be developed. However, based on an assumed average unit size of 1,000 square feet, the development would yield 189 units. Under MIH Option 1, 25 percent of units would be affordable, or 47 units, averaging at 60 percent of AMI (\$47,760 annual income for an individual, or \$68,220 for a family of four).

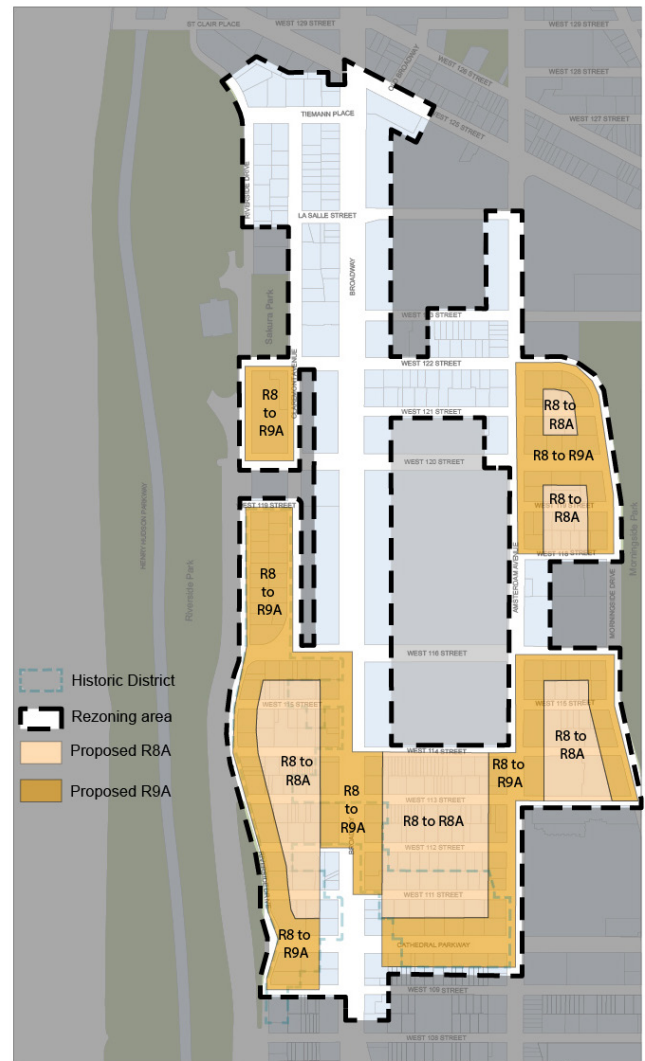
The following table summarizes the zoning analysis under each option: Existing R9A without Voluntary Inclusionary Housing, with VIH, and the proposed zoning of R10A with Mandatory Inclusionary Housing.

	R9A - No VIH	R9A - VIH	R10A - MIH
Max Height	135'	170'	230'
Total Units	95	129	189
Affordable Units	0	26	47
AMI Level	N/A	80%	60%

We propose updated zoning for residential streets that would accomplish two objectives:

- To do this we propose two types of contextual residential districts:

- R8A on narrow streets like W. 113th Street maintains the existing 6.02 residential FAR and 6.5 community facility FAR, and adds a 120' height limit for all new development.
- R9A on wide streets like Amsterdam Avenue increases residential density by 0.32 FAR, and increases community facility FAR by 1. It also adds a 145' height cap for all new development.



Proposed contextual rezoning districts.

Expanding Commercial Options

Objective: to improve opportunities for small businesses and address the disconnected, pedestrian-unfriendly condition of commercial corridors.

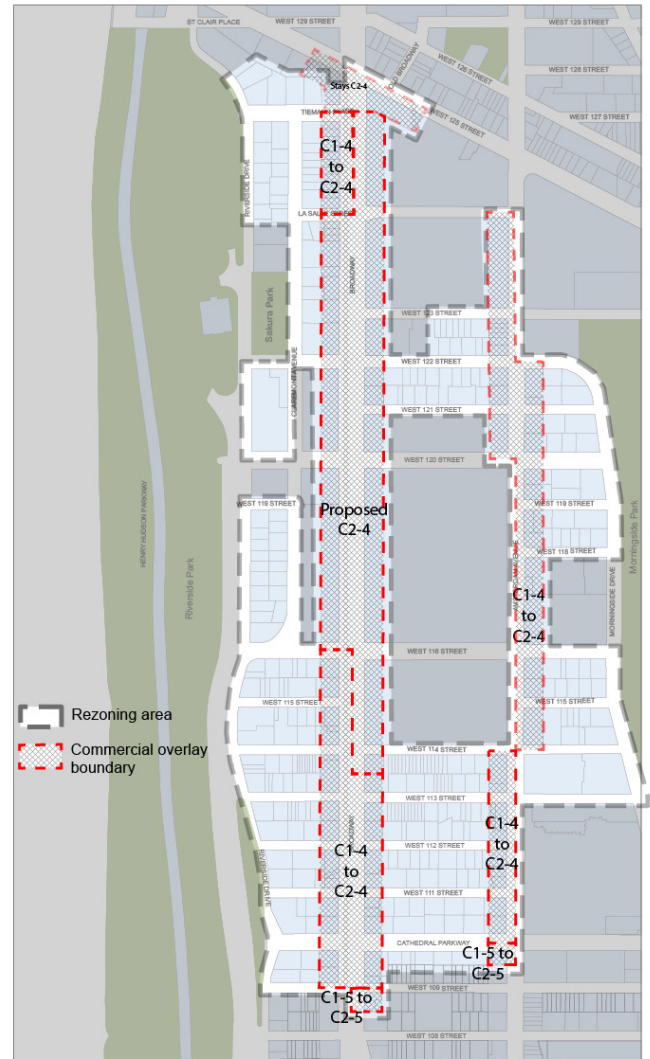
We developed three key metrics for success regarding commercial rezoning in the neighborhood:

- Continues to activate pedestrian space and bring some non-conforming uses into conformance
- Create more options for commercial uses
- Does not change commercial FAR

We propose updating the commercial zoning in the neighborhood by mapping C2 commercial overlays up and down Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue as shown at right. Two slightly different zoning designations are proposed:

- C2-4 overlays would be mapped anywhere there is currently a C1-4 overlay, maintaining the same intensity of use while adding more options for business and property owners; a C2-4 overlay would also be mapped where there is currently no commercial overlay on Broadway, specifically addressing some of the areas that have limited pedestrian activity or connectivity.
- C2-5 overlays would be mapped on two blocks below W. 110th Street where there is currently a C1-5 overlay, again maintaining the same intensity of use while adding more options for business and property owners.

Just like C1-4 and C1-5, these updated zoning overlays would allow 2 FAR of retail, within 100 feet of the street. What would change is that they would allow local establishments not visited on day-to-day basis, which are not presently allowed. For example, commercial corridors could see currently prohibited uses such as theaters, bike repair shops, small amusements like billiards or bowling, and art studios.



Proposed commercial overlay changes.

Summary of Proposed Zoning Changes

Produce affordable housing near transit

- R10A and R9A MIH to produce affordable housing
- Adds density around W. 110th and W. 125th St. subway stations to provide transit-accessible affordable units
- Allows us to map MIH and require ~25% permanently affordable units

Protect rent-stabilized clusters

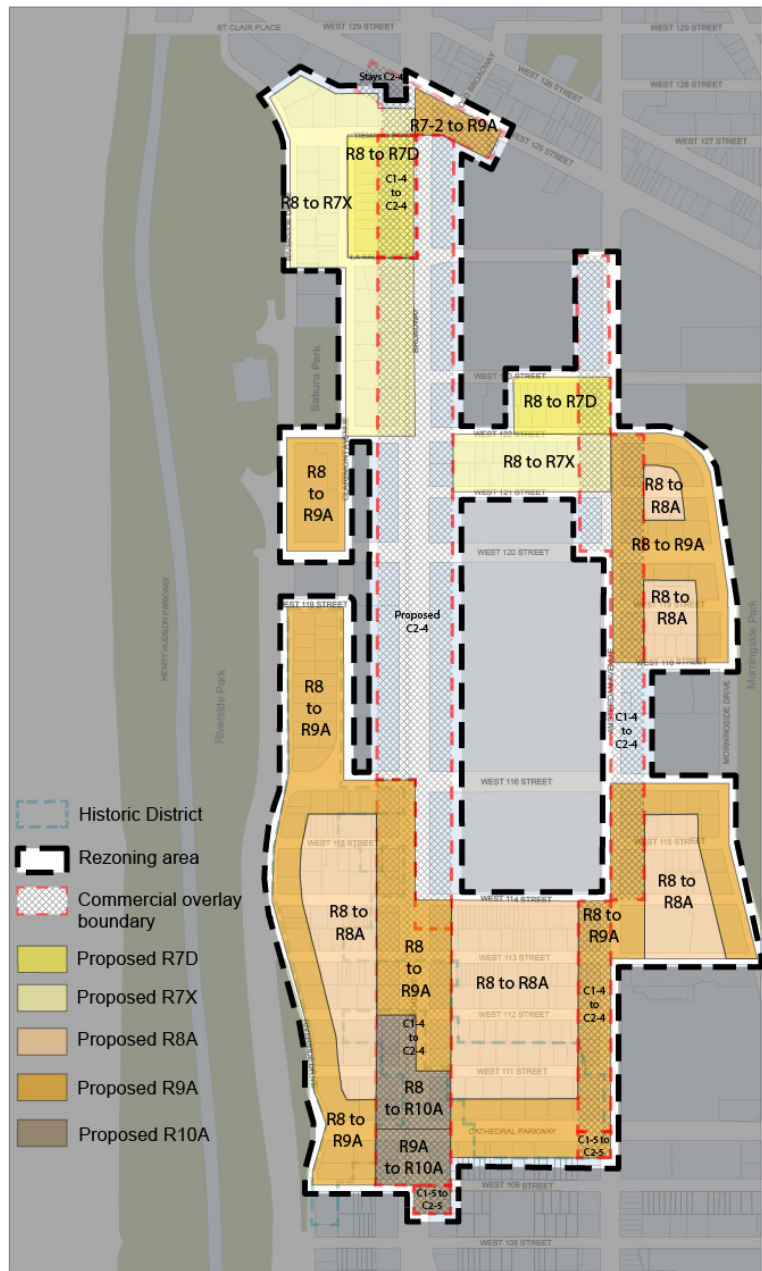
- Targeted R7 contextual zoning limited to areas with vulnerable concentrations of rent-stabilized units

Preserve contextual neighborhood character

- R8A and R9A contextual zoning
- Keeps or adds to existing allowable floor area; adds height limits
- Prevents out-of-context new buildings above 17 stories (wide streets) or 12 stories (narrow streets)

Encourage retail along Broadway and Amsterdam

- C2-4 commercial overlays on avenues
- New overlay on upper Broadway
- Upgraded existing C1-4 overlays on the rest of Broadway and Amsterdam allows wider range of retail



Overview of proposed zoning changes.



From left, Council Land Use Director Raju Mann, Council Member Mark Levine, Department of City Planning Director Marisa Lago, Council Member Levine's Chief of Staff Aya Keefe, and Borough President Gale Brewer on a tour of Morningside Heights with MHCC and DCP staff in December 2018.

Application Process and Environmental Review

Application Process

We have already taken several steps toward preparing a land use application to go before DCP and, ultimately, through a ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Process). They are outlined in roughly chronological order below.

Winter 2019-2020

- Held Working Group meetings to solicit input
- Began to prepare Draft Planning Framework Document including History, Goals/Purpose/Needs, Zoning maps
- Began DCP Pre-Application process
- Began preparing environmental review documents

Spring 2020

- Conducted stakeholder engagement with institutions (such as Columbia, Mt. Sinai, Riverside Church) and community stakeholders such as P.A.'L.A.N.T.E.

Harlem and Goddard Riverside

- Briefed and took initial targeted feedback from CB7 and CB9 leadership
- Continued conversation with DCP including Informational Interest meeting

Still to be completed

- Continue public engagement including larger-format feedback such as Town Halls
- Begin Environmental Assessment Statement (EAS) (7-9 months)
- Complete Pre-Application Materials and DCP Inter-Divisional meeting
- Complete EAS
- Begin ULURP process

Environmental Review

Based on the zoning framework presented here, preliminary analysis by Council Land Use staff suggests that the proposed rezoning would require an Environmental Assessment Statement (“EAS”), as opposed to an Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”). The Council Land Use team prepared a draft Reasonable Worst-Case Development Scenario (“RWCDs”) that would be the basis for the environmental work and took initial steps toward engaging a consultant to perform the actual analysis work.

In spring 2020, Council Land Use staff began preliminary foundation work related to the environmental review, as follows:

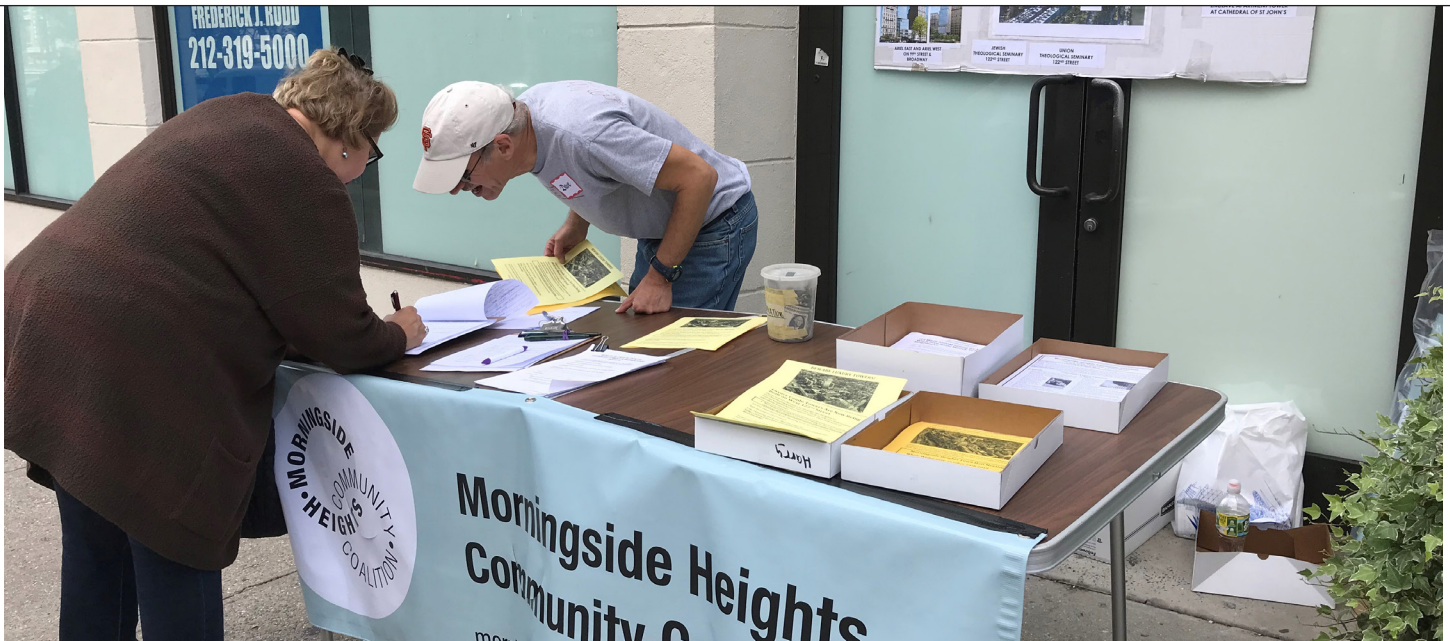
- Discussed overview of RWCDs with DCP staff
- Issued a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to qualified consultants
- Reviewed submissions by three prominent New York City environmental review firms

During the review period of consultant bids, the coronavirus pandemic peaked in New York City, bringing an unexpected stop to the procurement process, due to sudden and significant budgetary constraints.

Still to be completed

- Reinstate and complete procurement process or obtain non-Council funding
- Coordinate environmental review, working together with selected consultant and DCP staff
- Complete and submit EAS for review and signoff by DCP





MHCC conducts one of its regular tabling events in the neighborhood.

Next Steps

Further Engagement

Some stakeholders in particular require follow-up after initial conversations:

- CB7 and CB9 Land Use Committees. Both Community Boards' leadership have been briefed and had input on the zoning framework. CB9 Chair Barry Weinberg is an MHCC member and has been integral to the development of this study. Both Boards' Land Use Committees have requested briefings on the framework, and this has not occurred yet.
- Manhattan Legal Services has been identified as a key local stakeholder on the west side of Manhattan.
- Public town hall. A larger-format forum such as an open-invite and widely advertised town hall or workshop would allow community members at large to understand and weigh in on the zoning framework.

DCP Follow-up

Ongoing conversations with DCP have been productive, and officials there have been generally supportive of our efforts and indicated that they would help us move the application forward.

The authors have submitted several of the initial required analysis documents, including the Zoning Map and Land Use Map.

Feedback from DCP from the pre-application meeting included the following, which were assessed and incorporated into revisions of the plan in 2020:

- A request to consider higher density on wide streets
- Wariness of non-conformance, especially in R7
- Wary of constraints on institutions
- Request to consider higher density at transit nodes
- Request to consider C2-4 commercial overlays instead of C1-4

The following materials will still be required to continue the process with DCP:

- Land Use map
- Site photos
- Pre-Application Statement
- Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario package

Environmental Review Next Steps

In order to complete the environmental review for this rezoning, the consultant procurement process would have to be restarted, and a selection would have to be made. Upon selection, the applicant team would direct the chosen consultant to compile and submit the EAS in coordination with DCP's Environmental Review Division.

Based on initial projections, and as noted above, we anticipate the project would require completion of an EAS, instead of an EIS. Logistically, it is the team's general position that, barring changes to the proposed zoning framework, a consultant could be engaged using the same project parameters and criteria as were applied under the 2020 RFP. The team also generally believes that one of the three original respondents (all of which showed strong credentials, are well-known within the field, and generally submitted similar fee proposals) could also be solicited to negotiate a consultant agreement.

The ability (or prudence) of conducting an environmental review of this type and scale during, or in the immediate aftermath of, a pandemic remains an open issue. For

example, one key question has to do with traffic data (which could have effects on analyses related to the Transportation and Noise chapters, for example), and whether suitable data could be collected during a time when traffic and transit patterns remain impacted by the ongoing pandemic and related restrictions or modifications of typical activity. The Land Use Division staff are currently awaiting guidance on this question from DCP and other involved City agencies.

Outstanding Issues

McDonald's site

The site at the southwest corner of Broadway and W. 125th Street, a former McDonald's, is the location of a planned 30-story development by Columbia University.

The lot was not included in the proposed zoning framework as the project's timeline is significantly ahead of the timeline for any future zoning changes, and thus would be grandfathered under the existing zoning. However, the site sits prominently adjacent to transit and a critical node the neighborhood. We believe continued engagement and discussion is needed to ensure the new development fits into the overall aims of the neighborhood framework and provides real benefit to the community as a whole.



The garden next to the Croton Aqueduct Gatehouse on Amsterdam Ave. at W. 119th Street.



CB7 projected development sites

As mentioned above, two projected development sites (2810 Broadway and 2825-2835 Broadway) are located in CB7 and were rezoned to R9A in 2007. Should CB7 decide to participate in the study proposal and approve the inclusion of these two projected development sites, they could provide a significant number of affordable housing units in an area able to easily accommodate them.

As part of our working group session, some members of CB7 expressed concerns about rezoning an area that was amended as recently as 2007 and increasing height and density beyond the existing R9A framework.

It is important to highlight the significant tradeoffs to be considered. The proposed R10A zoning, for example, is in line with the existing zoning rationale that prioritizes high density development within a couple blocks of transit stations – especially on wide streets with high development potential.

While the R9A (with VIH) zoning was approved for these sites over a decade ago, there has been zero development

and, to our knowledge, none has been publicly explored. It is important to note that no new affordable units have been produced in the entirety of the R9A/VIH area along Broadway (which encompasses 24 block fronts) since the zoning was updated. Unlike VIH, the MIH program is not negotiated on a site-by-site basis, but offers clear standards of affordability requirements that are widely accepted and utilized by developers. We believe mapping MIH on these sites represents a better opportunity to produce more permanently affordable units than the existing zoning.

Supporting further tenant organizing

This rezoning plan has been intentionally tailored to minimize the risk of residential displacement and tenant harassment, especially in and around clusters of rent stabilized housing. However, zoning is not an absolute protection, and increased development potential always carries risk of rent pressure falling on existing residents.

The team recognizes the importance of and supports further tenant organizing to provide tenants with tools and resources to stay in their homes.

Appendix

Appendix I - In Depth: MHCC's Participatory Workshops Foster Dialogue About Rezoning

Town Halls and workshops with community residents have been crucial to prioritizing the rezoning's objectives. Beginning in 2016, MHCC hosted two well-publicized community meetings, an interactive workshop at Corpus Christi Church, and two workshops over the first couple years of their engagement process. These early community meetings each attracted around 200 people – a major show of interest in a small neighborhood. The community meetings were addressed by Council Member Mark Levine, State Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell (seen here in picture at right addressing the Workshop) and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, who all gave remarks endorsing the Coalition's goal of rezoning for reasonable development in the Heights.

On January 25th, 2017, MHCC facilitated a Community Visioning Workshop at Corpus Christi Church, which was an opportunity for approximately 150 residents and stakeholders to discuss their community's future, and consider implementing potential solutions, such as rezoning, to ensure that neighborhood character is sustained; that the local economy thrives; and that middle-class and working-class residency and diversity remain viable now and for years to come. The following is an in-depth look at that workshop as an example of the type of community-centered engagement MHCC has been conducting.

What prompted the 2017 workshop?

1. MHCC's 2016 "Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment" report detailed how the neighborhood's zoning put neighborhood sites



State Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell addresses the audience at an MHCC workshop.

in the crosshairs of luxury developers, by enabling luxury developers to take advantage of the absence of building height restrictions along with the transfer or consolidation of air rights, to greatly exceed the height of contextual neighborhood buildings. It also noted that, aside from casting shadows and blocking views and sunlight, the luxury towers cause area tax rates to rise, leading to higher rents and displacement of long-time residents and small businesses.

2. The ongoing and planned development, respectively, of two luxury residential towers in the neighborhood, which were enabled through the sale of air rights by venerable Morningside institutions, the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and the Union Theological Seminary (UTS). At 32 and 40 stories, respectively, these towers soar high above the mid-rise context of most of the neighborhood, and have attracted the criticism of many residents.
3. Although Morningside was (and is) among the most densely populated, most rapidly gentrifying New York City neighborhoods, only 7% (all in one building, the Enclave) of the estimated 1,200 new apartments

Appendix

recently built or planned could be considered “affordable.”

How It Was Organized

The workshop was planned, publicized, and conducted by the coalition’s Action and Zoning committees. Flyers were distributed on the street and in building lobbies, publicized on Facebook and on the MHCC website; multiple emails were sent to hundreds of residents; dozens of local merchants were invited, as were other stakeholders, such as public and private institutions and churches. Members of the Coalition were already experienced in reaching the community through the recent successful campaign to designate the first Morningside Heights historic district.

The Workshop was attended by 150 people, mainly residents, but also including representatives from Community Board 9, Columbia University, Jewish and Union Theological Seminaries, elected officials’ offices, the Morningside Area Alliance, and local schools. It was organized into small groups of 10-12 people at 13 tables to encourage discussion and thoughtful responses. A map showing where participants live indicates that they came from all parts of the Heights.

Every table had a volunteer facilitator, who had been trained in advance by an experienced facilitator, and a reporter to take notes. Each participant received a letter explaining the purpose and organization of the Workshop and a form for volunteering for one of the MHCC’s committees. The heart of the Workshop material was a form listing various areas, such



Appendix

as housing, transportation and public services, to guide the discussion, and on which participants were asked to enter their priorities and comments.

Explanatory material was displayed, and enlargements of the Coalition's Platform were on the walls, as was the extensive survey of "soft sites," a map of the eight sites slated for development, and graphic illustrations of the condominium towers proposed by the Seminaries.

Participants' Feedback

The Community Workshop participants' voices were expressed and documented at the roundtable discussions, through submitted written responses, and through selected summary "headlines" presented by a representative of each of the thirteen groups at the end of the workshop. During this process, long-time residents expressed that they had become rent-burdened as a result of the real estate luxury overdevelopment boom, and that "truly affordable" housing was a top need for the community.

To that end, some of the participants' "headlines" included the following:

1. "Truly Affordable" Housing Needed to Promote Diversity and Preserve Sense of Community
2. Apartment Rental Pricing Soaring -- Middle-Class Priced Out
3. Re-Zoning Needed to Promote Contextual Development, Limit Building Heights
4. Overdevelopment Limiting Pedestrian Spaces, Walkability
5. Schools Overcrowded, Underfunded -- Need a New School Built for the 21st Century
6. Tall Towers Robbing Morningside of Light, Air, and Space

7. Transportation Needs Upgrade -- More Buses, More Trains, Elevators for Elderly and Disabled, Improve 125th Street Station Conditions

8. "Mom and Pop" Stores Disappearing -- Luxury Housing Raising Rents

Issues Identified Through The Workshop

Coming out of the 2018 workshop, MHCC was able to identify several key issues that were foremost in the minds of Morningside residents. Those issues regard ongoing luxury development that does not include affordable housing, overcrowded and inaccessible transportation, and needed improvements to schools and community facilities.

Luxury Development without Affordable Housing

Numerous recent developments drew the concern of Morningside residents:

1. Union Theological Seminary (UTS), located between W. 120th and W. 122nd Street, sold 350,000 square feet of air rights, which is being allocated towards a slender luxury 42-story tower. UTS maintained that



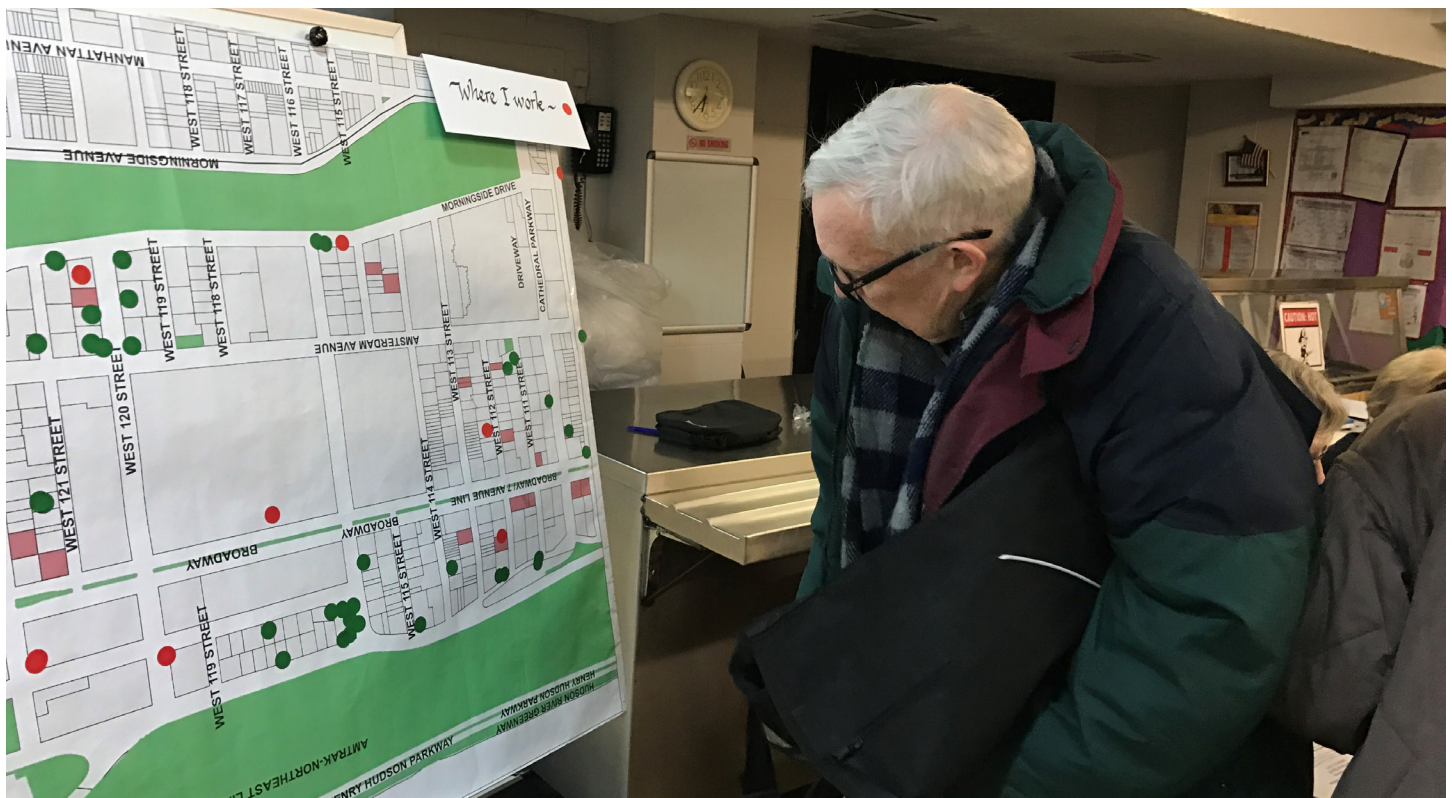
Appendix

as much as \$150 million is required to renovate the campus, and sale of air rights were their best opportunity to generate that revenue.

2. Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), located at 3080 Broadway, sold a parcel of land to the developer Savanna, which constructed a 250,000 square-foot 33-story luxury condominium tower. Savanna paid \$77 million for the land and air rights. The seminary has used the money to renovate existing space and add new facilities, including a meeting center, library, and residence hall.
3. 30 Morningside Drive, where developer Delshah paid \$111.5 million to Mount Sinai/St. Luke's for five hospital buildings (two of which are landmarked) being converted to 200 all-luxury rentals.
4. In addition to institutional campus buildings, existing rental apartment buildings are being sold or renovated as luxury units, displacing long-time residents. These include 415 W. 120th Street, a seven-story 1910 student residence that JTS sold to developer The Orbach Group for \$19 million. The historic building was then re-sold and demolished to make way for a 15-story building designed to house students at market rental rates.

Other sites in the neighborhood have not seen major redevelopment yet but will or could be in coming years, and residents are wary of seeing more unaffordable, disproportionately tall buildings be constructed in the neighborhood:

1. Columbia's "McDonald's" site, at the southwest corner of Broadway and W. 125th Street (known in the neighborhood as "the McDonald's site") is the location of Columbia University's in-progress 34-story tower. It will use the building for its own use to provide offices, educational facilities, and student and faculty housing. No public affordable housing is planned.
2. The Riverside Church, directly across the street from UTS, could be in a position to execute a luxury development deal with the sale of air rights, similar to the ones at UTS or JTS. MHCC has advocated that affordable housing be the primary focus of any redevelopment of Riverside's property.
3. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, a recently designated (February 21, 2017) City landmark, could sell its development rights to developers seeking to build across W. 110th Street, although the amount of square footage available to sell remains unclear. Three large residential towers have already been





developed on St. John's campus under long-term lease arrangements resulting in over \$5 million in revenue annually for the church. In 2008, AvalonBay Communities developed the 20-story Avalon Morningside with 295 rental units, 20% of which are designated "affordable." In 2016, the Brodsky Organization developed the two 15-story luxury towers of Enclave at the Cathedral with 430 units, again 20% of which are designated as affordable.

4. 1080 Amsterdam Avenue, a 20-story St. Luke's (now Mt Sinai Morningside) Hospital property sold in 2015 for \$29.1 million. The building had provided affordable housing to the hospital staff before conversion to all luxury housing (now called The Stonehenge.)
5. 3143-3149 Broadway, which changed ownership in October of 2018. Details of the sale are less clear, but the three contiguous buildings near the 125th Street subway station could make an attractive site for redevelopment.

Transportation

At the Community Workshop, participants raised concerns about Morningside's subway stations during their roundtable discussions. They noted that platforms are often overcrowded and are not accessible for persons with mobility issues. Costly improvements, such as new escalators and elevators at 125th Street and the installation of elevators at the 110th Street and 116th

Street stations, were identified as essential. Workshop participants felt that real estate developers should be required to provide transit improvements in exchange for expanded FAR.

Schools

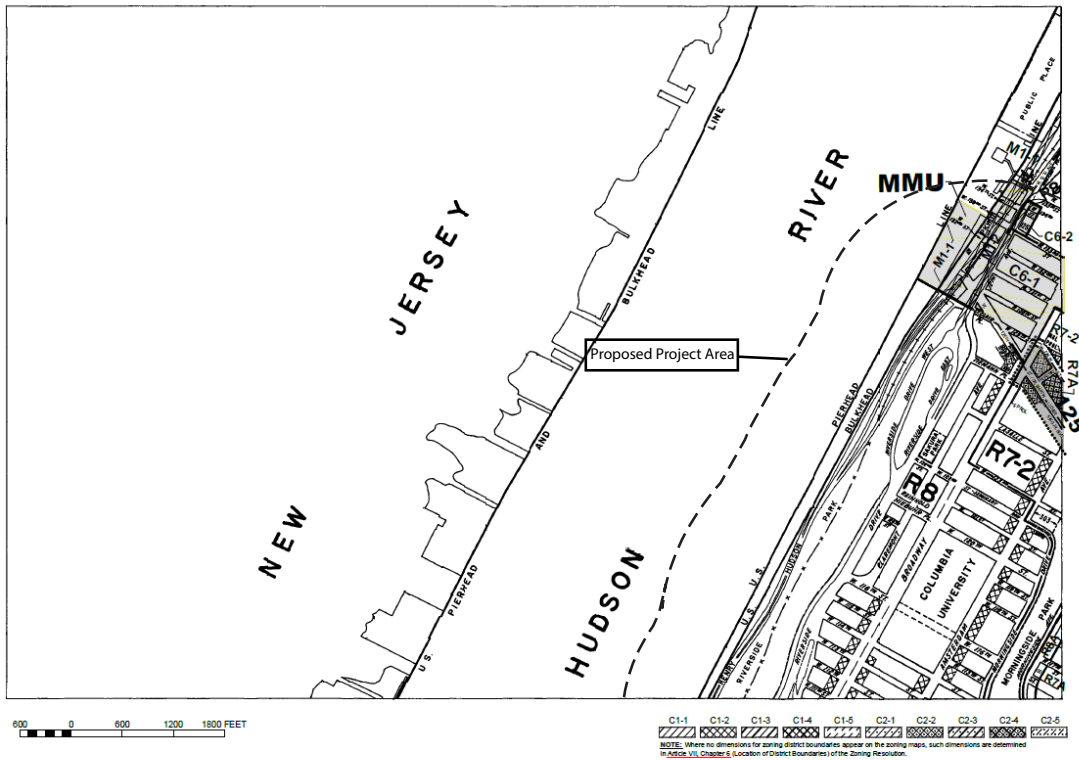
Participants noted that schools are overcrowded and outdated. For example, at the time the workshop was held, the top-performing Teachers College Community School had a capacity of 131, but had an enrollment of 273, or 208% over capacity. Parents indicated that the Department of Education's plan of placing some students from other schools in nearby P.S. 36 only worsened a situation where students were already struggling with limited resources.

Community Amenities

Workshop participants cited that centers are needed for seniors in a community with a large percentage of residents who are "aging-in-place." In addition, stairs that provide access to both Riverside and Morningside Parks are crumbling. Participants feared that continuing development of densely-populated apartment towers without infrastructure upgrades to accompany them, would worsen the situation.



Appendix III - Proposed Zoning Amendments



ZONING MAP
THE NEW YORK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Major Zoning Classifications:
The number(s) and/or letter(s) that follows on R, C or M District designation indicates use, bulk and other controls as described in the text of the Zoning Resolution.

R - RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
C - COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
M - MANUFACTURING DISTRICT

SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICT
The letter(s) within the shaded area designates the special purpose district as described in the text of the Zoning Resolution.

AREA(S) REZONED

Effective Date(s) of Rezoning:
04-30-2008 C 080099(A) ZMM

Special Requirements:
For a list of lots subject to CEQR environmental requirements, see APPENDIX C.
For a list of lots subject to "D" restrictive declarations, see APPENDIX D.
For Inclusionary Housing designated areas on this map, see APPENDIX F.

CITY MAP CHANGE(S):
♦ AS CORRECTED 03-19-09

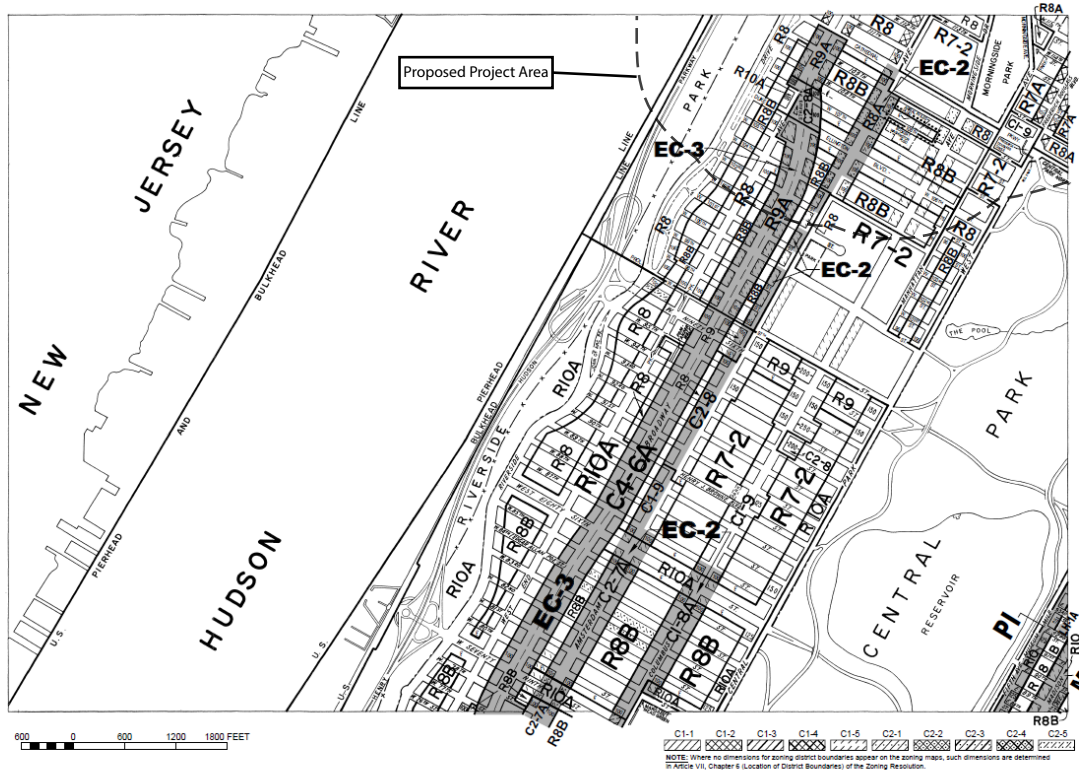
MAP KEY

		3b
	5c	6a
	5d	6b

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ZONING MAP 5c

NOTE: Zoning information as shown on this map is subject to change. For the most up-to-date zoning information for this map, visit the Zoning section of the Department of City Planning website: www.nyc.gov/dcp/zoning, or contact the Zoning Information Desk at (212) 720-3291.



ZONING MAP
THE NEW YORK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Major Zoning Classifications:
The number(s) and/or letter(s) that follows on R, C or M District designation indicates use, bulk and other controls as described in the text of the Zoning Resolution.

R - RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT
C - COMMERCIAL DISTRICT
M - MANUFACTURING DISTRICT

SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICT
The letter(s) within the shaded area designates the special purpose district as described in the text of the Zoning Resolution.

AREA(S) REZONED

Effective Date(s) of Rezoning:
04-25-2018 C 180112 ZMM

Special Requirements:
For a list of lots subject to CEQR environmental requirements, see APPENDIX C.
For a list of lots subject to "D" restrictive declarations, see APPENDIX D.
For Inclusionary Housing designated areas and Mandatory Inclusionary Housing areas on this map, see APPENDIX F.

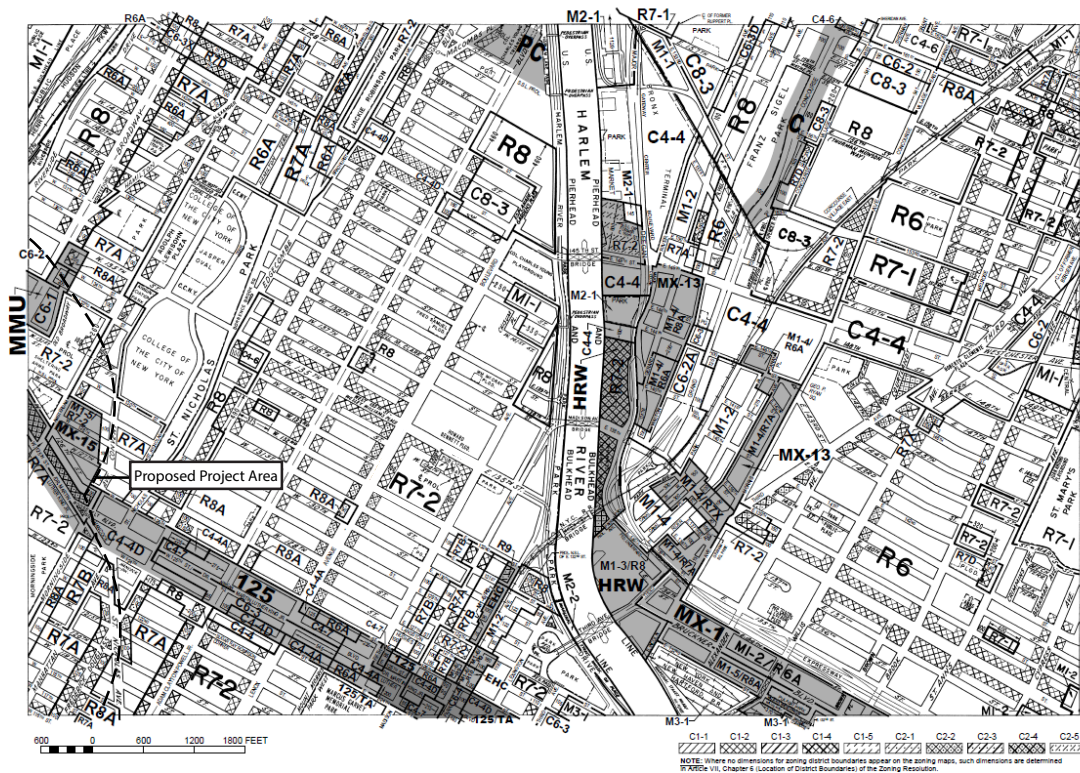
MAP KEY

	5c	6a
	5d	6b
8a	8c	9a

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ZONING MAP 5d

NOTE: Zoning information as shown on this map is subject to change. For the most up-to-date zoning information for this map, visit the Zoning section of the Department of City Planning website: www.nyc.gov/dcp/zoning, or contact the Zoning Information Desk at (212) 720-3291.



Appendix IV - Morningside Heights Community Coalition Advocacy and Publications

The following publications are attached as PDFs below.

1. Platform on Residential Development in Morningside Heights (2016)
2. MHCC “Soft Site” Report (2016)
3. MHCC Zoning Committee Guidelines and Principles (2016)
4. Morningside Speaks! Report (2017)
5. Op-Ed in City Limits (2017)
6. Petition to DCP supporting rezoning (2018)
7. Op-Ed in “Urban Matters” (2018)
8. MHCC Empty Storefronts Report (2019)
9. MHCC Survey of Morningside Heights Community (2020)
10. Interview of MHCC members in The Columbia Spectator (2021)

MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION

PLATFORM FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS

Manhattan's residential real estate boom has arrived in Morningside Heights. Two luxury rental projects have already been completed: the 428- apartment Enclave on West 113th Street and the Stonehenge with 96 apartments on Amsterdam Avenue. St. Luke's Hospital is selling four vacant buildings for \$115 million for conversion into hundreds of high-rent apartments. Jewish Theological Seminary recently sold the rights to build a luxury condominium tower of 32 stories on West 122nd Street to the Savanna Real Estate Fund for \$ 77 million and sold buildings at 3060 Broadway and 415 West 120th Street, with a total of 86 apartments, to investors for \$54 million. Union Theological Seminary (UTS) is planning to sell the rights to build a 40- story luxury condominium on its campus on West 122nd Street.

Neighborhood organizations want to make sure that the planned housing developments do not harm the Heights and in fact offer real benefits to the neighborhood and its families and enhance public services. Our platform for residential development consists of eight elements.

Height Consistent With Nearby Buildings

The height of new buildings should be consistent with their neighbors. In the cases of Jewish Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary they should not exceed 18 to 21 stories, the height of the Teachers College residence and Morningside Gardens, respectively.

Exteriors Harmonize With Surrounding Buildings

The exteriors of new buildings should be of the same or similar materials, mainly stone or brick, as buildings in their immediate vicinity.

Views of Nearby Landmarks Preserved

The views of nearby landmarks, such as Riverside Church and the UTS tower at Broadway and 120th Street, should not be blocked by new buildings nor should they cast intrusive shadows.

Mitigate the Impact on the Environment and Local Services

Mitigate any adverse impacts of new development, especially its cumulative effects. This includes effects on transportation, parking, schools and other public services, shopping, existing residents as well as air quality, sanitation and noise during and after construction.

Provide Affordable Housing

At least 30% of the apartments in new housing developments should be designated permanent affordable housing or developers should provide such housing in nearby locations.

Support Local Social and Economic Development

Institutions and developers that will benefit from the planned housing should invest in local ventures such as affordable housing, services for youngsters and seniors, aiding businesses and reusing the gate house on Amsterdam through a community benefits agreement.

Rezoning Morningside Heights

The neighborhood's zoning should be revised to encourage appropriate development in terms of land use and the height and bulk of buildings.

Union Wages and Building Safety

Guiding principles for building construction should include union jobs, safe working conditions, job training and maximum opportunities for local businesses.

Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment

Prepared by:

The Morningside Heights Community Coalition
The Morningside Heights Historic District Committee
P.O. Box 250405, Columbia University Station
New York, N.Y. 10025

September 2016

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to draw urgent attention to the potential for overdevelopment of many “at risk” sites that threatens to change forever the face of Morningside Heights.

From new apartments at the Enclave on the grounds of St. John the Divine on West 113th Street to the four former St. Luke’s Hospital buildings across the street, to high-rise luxury towers going up at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and Union Theological Seminary (UTS), our neighborhood has already been uniquely targeted by developers taking advantage of outdated zoning regulations that enable “as-of-right” construction and unfettered acquisition of “air rights.”

Recently completed new and rehabilitated housing and projects in active planning, such as JTS and UTS towers, will contain close to 1,200 apartments, of which only 7% will be affordable, all in the Enclave project at the Cathedral. We, and many in the community, believe that the already built and proposed new structures are wildly out of context with the surrounding neighborhood, impose stress on our already beleaguered infrastructure, and displace long-established small businesses. We are concerned that new and proposed luxury rental and condo buildings will exert market pressure for local landlords to evict working-class and middle-class tenants who comprise the college-town fabric of our distinct area.

We recognize and support the benefits of reasonable increased development density to provide affordable housing that will ensure new and current working-class and middle-class families a stable home. And we also strive to preserve the urban charm, historic institutions, and college-town lifestyle of Morningside, which developers also recognize as a highly attractive neighborhood for significant investment. We are seeking planning and zoning solutions that support the following objectives:

- Building heights consistent with nearby buildings
- Exteriors that harmonize with surrounding buildings
- Preservation of landmark views
- Mitigation of impact on the environment and local services
- Provision of affordable housing
- Support of local social and economic development
- Rezoning of Morningside Heights to encourage appropriate development

- Well-paid construction jobs, training, and opportunities for local businesses

Vulnerable “Soft Sites” for Overdevelopment

In order to work from a common understanding of the areas that are “at risk” for overdevelopment in Morningside, we have researched and compiled a list of “soft sites,” selected because they have one or more of the following distinctions: “low rise,” “tenant free,” “non-residential,” “vacant” and/or with available “air rights” “sufficient lot size for development”-- enabling developers to erect large towers inconsistent with the surrounding area, and create luxury rentals and condos beyond the affordability of our community.

The following data was obtained from the City Register (ACRIS); online articles and real estate information web sites; discussions with local representatives and with local merchants; and our own observations at site visits.

Based on a sampling of property reports, all applicable sites within this Morningside Heights area are assumed to be Zoned R-8, with commercial overlay C1-4, and with an allowed FAR of 6.02.



(1.)*TD Bank and American Apparel (VACANT) -- 2831

Broadway (NW corner 109th Street along Broadway)

Block 1893

Lot 43

Most recent recorded

deed: 4/27/2016 -- Party 1, TD

Bank and Party 2, The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh, but there is

also a 4/27/2016 deed to 2825 Broadway LLC (No further info found). Along with the adjacent Rite Aid site, this entire block, comprised of three one-story commercial sites, is at risk for overdevelopment.



(2.) *Rite Aid -- 2853 Broadway

(SW corner 110th Street)

Block 1893

Lot 50

(Note: Formerly Sloan's Supermarket -- property remained with Sloan family real estate ownership)

Most recent recorded

deed: 4/13/11 -- CKMR Corporation F/K/A Sloan's Supermarkets, Inc., 2 Bennet

Avenue, New York, NY 10033 -- 212 795 5600. Large, one-story corner site at risk for overdevelopment, along with entire block.

***Note:** Though the TD Bank, and vacant American Apparel are separate ownership and Lot from the Rite Aid, the contiguous storefronts and Lots could be combined to form an entire, block-long development along Broadway.



(3.) Congregation Ramath Orah Synagogue – 550 W. 110th Street
Block 1881

Lot 56

Built in 1921 in the Neo-Georgian style as the Westside Unitarian Church, the congregation was founded in 1942, and has been nominated (6/12/2015) by Gov. Cuomo to the State and National Registry of Historic Places.

Most recent deed recorded:

8/28/2007 – Congregation Ramath Orah. However, an Agreement also dated 8/28/2007 cites The

Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York.

Note: According to Meeting Notes from a Land Use Committee hearing in 2000, regarding variances for Columbia to construct a 12-story school and retail outlet adjacent to the Synagogue (which they proceeded to develop), “The applicant plans to use these development rights to develop the proposed building -- the unused development rights associated with the neighboring Lot 56 (Congregation Ramath Orah Synagogue) which rights are owned by the applicant (Columbia).”

Soft Site? – It would seem that Columbia has already used the Synagogue air rights, but if not, the site would be attractive to a developer who could offer to house a new Synagogue within a modern tower, unless the proposed historic designation (not yet granted) prohibits destruction of the site.



(4.) Banco Popular -- 2852

Broadway (SE corner 111th Street) -
- (slated for demolition, according to Assemblymember Dan O'Donnell)
Block 1882

Lot 61

Most recent recorded deed:

6/2/2016- Urban-Scape LLC, Wells Fargo Bank as Trustee

Urban-Scape LLC (not to be confused

with Chicago corporation of same name), owned by Eddie Mizrahi (no further information found). Columbia offices also located in building.

Additional Background: Low-rise site is next to building with commercial space and tenants (4 stories) housing Koronet Pizza and Mel's Burger, owned by Lawrence Friedland, chairman of Friedland Properties (whose website reports owning over 100 properties). It would seem air rights could be obtained from Friedland to build a high-rise at site, and is therefore at risk for overdevelopment.



(5.) Citibank Site -- 2861 Broadway (NW corner 111th Street) -- **VACANT**, closed since January 2014 fire completely destroyed site.

Block 1894

Lot 47

Most recent recorded deed:

4/30/2014 -- Elizabeth Hutchins, Co-Executor

Additional Background: The property has been in the Hutchins family since 1971, perhaps earlier. Hutchins, along with her husband R. Alastair Short, inherited property from her

father. According to Assemblymember Dan O'Donnell, Citibank, the lessee, is responsible for re-building the site, but initially had wanted to purchase the building and perhaps neighboring building air rights (2867 Broadway, and adjacent buildings) to develop a taller structure. However, the owners prefer to continue to lease the site to Citibank. Current plans are for a modest, low-rise bank site, similar to previous. O'Donnell has confirmation of Citibank tentative plans: Phase I: Oct. thru Dec 2016 – Demolition, Scaffolding, Façade Restoration; Phase II: Dec. through July 2017 – Rooftop, Infrastructure; Phase III: July through Dec. 2017 – Build new branch. Site still at risk for overdevelopment until the rebuilding of the previous type of site is confirmed as underway. A job filing for Demolition was listed 9/9/16.



(6.) Samad Deli and The Heights (upstairs restaurant) -- 2867 Broadway (between 111th - 112th Street, Westside)

Block 1894

Lot 49

Most recent recorded deed: 3/12/2012 -- Miriam Jochnowitz, and Carol Jochnowitz, Executrix, inherited from Ruth Fink.

Note: According to Samad owner/manager, store is on month-to-month lease, and "real estate people"

were taking pictures and "looking around". Site still at risk for overdevelopment, depending on plans for the former Citibank site.



(7.) The former Vareli Restaurant (VACANT) -- 2869

Broadway (between 111th-112th Street, Westside)

Block 1894

Lot 50

Most recent recorded deed: 6/13/2012 -- ZOI Realty.

Note: Site is owned by Zoitass family, owners of Westside Market. The former Vareli restaurant was owned and operated by the son of George Zoitass. Spotted online ad in May 2016 for leasing site at \$30K/month, but site remains vacant. Still at risk for overdevelopment.



(8.) 2875 Broadway (aka 600 West 112th Street -- SW corner)

Block 1894

Lot 52

Most recent recorded deed: 10/30/2003

-- Longfellow Properties, Inc. and Lillian Seril (Party 2)

Note: Site has the following retail storefronts: Pinkberry, Possibilities -- a party notions store, Chase Bank, a small VACANT storefront, and a large VACANT storefront on the corner (the former Bank Street Book Store). Building also has upstairs office tenants, including The Columbia Spectator, the student newspaper of Columbia University.

Note: Longfellow is a real estate company operated by Barbara and Pearl Seril, the daughters of the original owner, Lillian Seril, who died in 2004. Seril once owned THE BELNORD, 225 W. 86th Street, the site of a highly contentious rent strike in the 1970s. Barbara Seril is currently registered as an attorney with an office at the Longfellow Properties location, 30 East 76th Street, Floor 4, New York, NY 10021. 212 327 0011.

NOTE: This 2875 Broadway corner block site, along with the Citibank corner site, is optimal for overdevelopment when air rights of adjacent sites are obtained, possibly across the entire 111th-112th Westside block.



(9.) Community Garden -- known as The Peoples Garden -- 1036

Amsterdam Avenue at 111th Street

Block 1883

Lot 28

Most recent recorded

deed: 10/18/2004 -- City of New York

Note: Local community activists won

permanent "garden status" and approval from City Planning in 1985.

Soft Site? Would require change of status from City.



(10.) Parking Lot -- 506 W.

112th Street

Block 1883

Lot 38

Most recent recorded deed:

7/16/2010 -- Ecumenical

Community Housing

Opportunities, Phipps

Affordable II Housing

Development

The Parking Lot is adjacent to

508 W. 112th Street, a small

apartment building owned by

Nunz Realty, and it is also

adjacent to 1050 Amsterdam

Avenue. 1050 is a 100%

affordable housing facility

primarily for senior citizens, called Echo Apartments, and is owned by Phipps Affordable Housing (Phipps House), which is affiliated with the Sunnyside Development (a large affordable housing project voted down by Councilmember Van Bramer) and develops/manages many affordable housing apartment buildings throughout New York. Even though the Parking Lot is owned by a business entity that relies on government funding to support development of affordable housing, Phipps may be free to use air rights from adjacent buildings (508 owned by Nunz, and 1050 Amsterdam, owned and/or operated by Phipps itself) to construct a "non-contextual" mid-block tower.

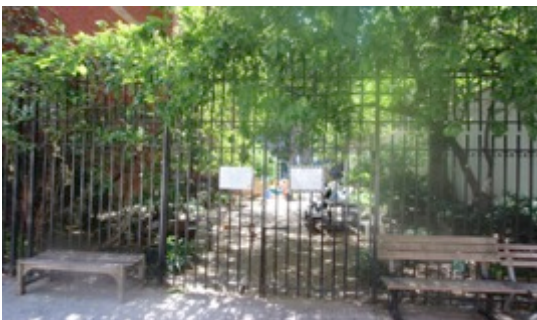


(11.) Book Culture and Post Office --
 536 W. 112th Street
 Block 1883
 Lot 54
 Most recent recorded deed: 8/27/2013
 -- Party 1, NYC Dept. of Transportation,
 Party 2, The Trustees of Columbia
 University in City of NY
 Note: Low-rise two-story structure
 Possible risk for overdevelopment if
 Columbia decides to proceed.



**(12.) 611 W. 112th Street (The
 Maranamay) -- VACANT AND
 SHUTTERED**
 Block 1895
 Lot 8
 Most recent recorded deed: 3/7/2006 --
 Party 1, 611 Realty Co, Party 2, 611 W
 112 St Realty Corp., P.O. Box 20570,
 New York, NY 10017 718 275 8001
 Note: The Maranamay, built in 1924,
 had been a charming 6-story residence

with large window awnings, as depicted in an original sales brochure from the NY Public Library archive. More recently, it functioned as "Colonial House," an SRO residence, according to the Columbia Spectator, and has been cited with numerous code violations. The owner of 611 Realty is Mark Hersh, a landlord with multiple Westside properties and other SROs, who was reported to have evicted tenants by force. The fortunes of Westside real estate skyrocketed, and Hersh claims that he was prohibited from renovating because he required a special permit called a "certificate of no harassment," according to a 2006 Village Voice article. Again, based on most recent deed filed, Hersh still owns property. Soft Site? -- A renovated Maranamay could become a luxury Co-op, or it could be demolished (however, unlikely since it fits within the projected Historic District). At this time, site seems to be in limbo.



(13.) 113th Street Play Garden* -- 520
 W. 113th Street -- contact John Arbo 212
 865 0497 (based on web page)
 No Block and Lot available
 Managed by the 113th Street Block
 Association
 Note: In 1998, Columbia decided not to
 develop the site and instead funded

playground improvements, at the urging of the community, according to the Columbia Spectator.

Soft Site? -- This site likely remains owned by Columbia, who perhaps could decide to develop. No official "park" designation found in records.



(14.) 514 W. 113th Street*

Block 1884

Lot 42

Adjacent to the 113th Street Play Garden, this low-rise structure houses Columbia offices. No deed is found in the City Register. The property is cited as belonging to The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York.

*Note: Columbia could combine this Lot with the adjacent Play Garden to develop the site, if they chose to proceed.



(15.) Parking Lot – Between 605 and 613 W. 113th Street

Block 1895

Lot 52

Most recent deed: 4/10/1981, Party 1 - Columbia University City of New York, Party 2 – State of New York

Description: Large, square lot with chain link fence and Reserved Parking only with permit.

Note: No Block or Lot attributed

directly to the Parking Lot, only to 607 W. 113th Street, as “Entire Lot.” The 113th Street lot is adjacent to a smaller rectangular vacant lot on 114th Street (possibly another individual site at risk) that could be combined into one large through-block site. Assume Parking Lots are owned by Columbia and it can develop each site, or combination of the two sites, if it chooses to proceed.



(16.) Columbia University Parking Lot and St. Luke's Building

– West 115th Street through to West 114th including 411 W. 114th Street

Block 1867

Lot 9

Most recent recorded deed: 10/30/02 – Party 1 -- St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, and Party 2 – Trustees of Columbia University in City of NY, and Consent

– 10/30/2002, Dormitory Authority of the State of New York, and United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The site consists of two parts: a parking lot along W. 115th owned by Columbia, and 411 W. 114th leased to St. Luke's and owned by Columbia..

Possible scenario: According to Columbia, the entire site may be slated for a 21-story building that would use air-rights from the adjacent Notre Dame church, and a zoning bonus for providing community facilities. The proposed building would be 300K sq ft, and Columbia has indicated that it could be used as an undergraduate residence.



Additionally, the adjacent parking lot along 115th Street could be at risk for overdevelopment as a separate site. It is used solely by Columbia University for their vehicles and storage. The entire parking lot site combined with the Columbia 114th Street building (along with the possible church air

rights) currently leased to St. Luke's, are all at risk for overdevelopment in roughly two years should Columbia decide to proceed when St. Luke's lease for 411 W. 114th Street expires.



(17.) 415 W. 120th Street

Block 1963

Lot 9

Most recent recorded deed:

2/18/2016 – Assignment of Leases and Rents, 415 West 120th Holdings LLC, and Deed: 2/18/2016, Party 1 – The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and Party 2 – 415 West 120th Street Holdings LLC

This residential building was recently sold by JTS, and is currently undergoing asbestos removal.

Originally “The Devinclare Residence for Self-Supporting Women”, built of Harvard brick and Indiana limestone,

was a gift to the Roman Catholic Church.

Note: 415 West 120th Holdings LLC is owned/managed by the Orbach Group, 707 Palisades Avenue, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632 201-242-4800. Orbach paid \$19 Million for the 5-story site, and owns multiple Westside properties including 929-971 Amsterdam Avenue, and 354 Cathedral Parkway. Orbach has been cited in articles for encouraging current tenants to leave in order to make room for higher-paying Columbia students.



(18.) GMC Parking Garage – 532 W.

122nd Street

Block 1976

Lot 56

Note: No deed listed in City Register, but Property is cited as belonging to Trustees of Columbia University. Recently, Westside garages have become highly attractive “soft sites” for developers. This particular garage is situated on the opposite side of the street from the new Jewish Theological Seminary luxury tower, under development by the Savanna Group, and is at risk for overdevelopment.



**(19.) Parking Lot and Garage –
500 Riverside Drive**

(International House rear on
Claremont Ave.)

Block 1994

Lot 57

Most recent recorded deed –
5/1/96 - Dormitory Authority of
New York State

Soft Site? – Though there is
currently no construction permit
on record, and the parking
provisions may be mandated

under zoning laws, this expansive space may be vulnerable to developers seeking a
prime location.



(20.) 3060 Broadway

Block 1976

Lot 1

Most recent recorded deed:

2/10/2016 – Party 1, The Jewish
Theological Seminary of America --

Party 2, 3060 Broadway Property

We understand that JTS has sold the
site to 3060 Broadway Property LLC,
but reserves the right to use the
property as dormitory housing for its
students for a period of four years,
until the new JTS housing facility on
122nd Street is ready for occupancy.

Note: 3060 Broadway Property is
owned/managed by Coltown
Properties, headed by Steven

Neuman and Israel Weinberger. According to a 6/19/2015 Village Voice article, *A Manhattan Landlord Is Evicting An Entire Block of Latino Business Owners*, Coltown, as co-owners, gave 8 businesses 30 days' notice to vacate along 162nd-163rd Streets and Broadway, after raising the rents to unaffordable rates. Some had been in the neighborhood over 40 years. Councilmember Mark Levine intervened. Levine is quoted as saying that he's seen this scenario play out time and again across the city: Landlords raise the rent on commercial tenants, the tenants can't pay and are forced to move out, chain stores and restaurants move in, and the local fabric of the community is destroyed. With Coltown Properties' track record, it would seem that 3060 Broadway is ultimately at risk of overdevelopment. In jeopardy are 5 mom-and-pop stores, including the Olive Tree Deli, the Broadway Au Lait Café, Columbia

Cleaners, a barbershop and a copy shop that are part of the fabric of the neighborhood and provide important services.



(21.) McDonalds -- 600 W. 125th Street*
Block 1995
Lot 26
Most recent recorded deed: 7/12/2004 -- Party 1, The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of NY, Party 2, McDonald's Corporation
McDonald's is on the corner with a large parking lot.



(22.) 614, 620, 622, 624 W. 125th Street (Abandoned)*
Block 1995
Lot 40
This line of several crudely built delivery docks sits adjacent to the McDonalds Lot, and is listed as "inactive/dissolution" as of 9/23/1992, having been incorporated on 11/05/1980 by

Santagelo & Cohen, 253 Broadway, NY. NY 20007. No specific deed located in the City Register, but the Lot is listed under The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York.

***Note:** The combined McDonalds and adjacent sites, across the street from the new Columbia campus site, are at high risk of overdevelopment should Columbia decide to proceed



(23.) Duane Reade
 -- 568 W. 125th Street
Amalgamated Bank
 -- 564 W. 125th Street
Wine Shop -- 566 W. 125th Street
 (VACANT)
Lincoln Fried Chicken -- 576 W. 125th Street
Subway Shop -- 578 W. 125th Street
 Block 1980
 Lot 75
 Note: The SW corner of 125th Street is a one-story

commercial structure with a Duane Reade on Broadway, and several small retail outlets, including a Subway and a Wine Shop, and Amalgamated Bank on 125th Street around the corner. There is also a Bank of America forming the corner slot. Although some of these locations have different addresses, they all seem to fall into a single Block and Lot, and under the same ownership.

Most recent recorded deed: 10/26/2012 -- Jay & Mark Irgang at 125th/Broadway LLC Irgang Equities, 121 Tweed Blvd., Nyack, NY 10960 212 758 0588, own many NY properties.

The 125th Street corner is at high risk of overdevelopment, given the right offer, and perhaps contingent on the retail leases (one shop is already vacant) including Duane Reade (Walgreen), a national chain.

Note: An adjacent **CTown Supermarket** at 560 W. 125th Street, Block 1980, Lot 1, is not part of the same ownership or deed as the group of stores. CTown is deeded 4/25/2012 to New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and United States Department of HUD.

Morningside Heights Community Coalition

Guidelines and Principles

December 2016

Background and Purpose

The Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC) emerged in April 2016 from widespread concern that the Heights is being threatened by overdevelopment. This damaging trend is exemplified by plans to build luxury condominium towers of up to 40 stories on West 122nd Street at Jewish Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary. Surveys by members of the Coalition revealed that there are more than 20 other “soft sites” on the Heights that are highly vulnerable to overdevelopment. Consequently, the MHCC sponsored community forums in June and September, each attended by over 200 residents, focused on the issue.

It became clear during these meetings that these impending and drastic changes to the character and social well-being of this historic neighborhood could only be addressed by changing its obsolete zoning regulations dating from 1961. Such a rezoning is strongly supported by our local elected officials.

To clarify and refine the community’s specific concerns, the Coalition has developed five supporting Principles and corresponding Guidelines. The Coalition hopes that these Guidelines and Principles will offer a foundation for further discussion with the wider community, as well as with significant stakeholders on the future of Morningside Heights. The Principles cover:

- Community
- Business and the Arts
- Adaptability
- Building Heights and Views
- Preservation

Community

GUIDELINE:

Maintain and promote a diverse, thriving and singular neighborhood character and a “Morningside” sense of place by ensuring that current residents, including seniors and low-income families, can remain in their homes, while attracting a diverse group of new, young families.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Ensure that seniors, the disabled and students have access to affordable housing.
2. Provide affordable two and three bedroom rental apartments for younger families.
3. Provide sufficient space, teachers, and staff for public schools, and expand school support programs, such as after-school activities.
4. Improve and maintain entryways to buildings, parks and subways to accommodate the disabled, the aged and children.
5. Increase police, fire, EMS and sanitation services for a growing population.
6. Expand public library services, especially for students, seniors and low-income families.
7. Provide senior and other community centers and services that will enable older people, especially those with low and moderate incomes, to remain in the neighborhood.

Business and the Arts**GUIDELINE:**

Maintain and promote a commercially viable neighborhood by enabling a diverse merchant base to thrive and serve local residents, families and visitors.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Encourage a mix of current and new small businesses at rents they can afford.
2. Minimize storefront vacancies through strategies, such as temporary “pop-up” stores and cultural exhibits, that encourage pedestrian traffic and local commerce.
3. Limit the size of commercial spaces and frontages to discourage inappropriate chain or big-box stores that diminish the quality of life and displace smaller, local establishments.
4. Promote tourism and access to historic sites, such as Grant’s Tomb, Riverside Church, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Columbia University, and ensure that they are accessible and not blocked by new buildings.

5. Increase investment in the arts – theater, music, dance, galleries -- to enhance the quality of community life and to attract visitors and commerce.
6. Increase the availability of convenient and essential neighborhood commercial services and amenities, such as laundromats, at reasonable rents.

Adaptability

GUIDELINE:

Adaptability initiatives should include preserving the unique character of Morningside Heights and ensuring that the fabric of the neighborhood will endure.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Promote energy efficiency by retro-fitting existing buildings and constructing new buildings with the latest energy technology to make Morningside a showcase "green" community.
2. Enhance access to the indoor and open spaces of local institutions, such as Columbia and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, by residents and visitors.
3. Improve transit – buses and subways – by expanding and making subway entrances and platforms more accessible and increasing the frequency of service. Make it easier and more convenient for the elderly and disabled to use the subways by keeping escalators in good order and installing elevators.

Building Heights and Views

GUIDELINE:

New buildings in Morningside Heights should reflect the neighborhood's scale and character.

PRINCIPLES:

1. The heights of new buildings should be consistent with nearby structures. For example, new buildings at or near the seminaries should not exceed the Manhattan School of Music and Teachers College residences, which are 18 floors.
2. The design and materials of new buildings should be consistent with and harmonize with their surrounding buildings.
3. Accommodate increased density by restricting new, high-rise buildings to designated avenue blocks, such as Broadway, while ensuring that mid-block, lower-rise buildings are preserved.

4. New buildings should not cast intrusive shadows over residential areas and parks.
5. New construction should offer space at reasonable rents to existing businesses.

Preservation

GUIDELINE:

Maintain the historic character, views and sense of place of Morningside through building preservation, creative adaptive re-use of existing historic buildings and measures to ensure that vulnerable tenants are secure in their homes.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Ensure that low and moderate-income tenants can remain in their homes by enforcing rent regulations and protecting against harassment and displacement by landlords.
2. Appropriately re-use existing buildings, such as the landmarked reservoir Gate House, to better serve the community, such as for a senior or visitor center.
3. Maintain Morningside's landmarks and vistas to enhance the singular character of the neighborhood and to encourage tourism and local commerce
4. Maintain Morningside's attraction to film and television production companies who value its accessibility and character and contribute to the city's economy.
5. Keep existing residential structures in good condition.

Morningside Heights Community Coalition
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MORNINGSIDE SPEAKS!

A Report on the January 25, 2017 Morningside Heights Community “Visioning” Workshop



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	pp. 4-6
I. Background and Organization of the Workshop	pp. 7-9
II. Workshop Output: “Voices of Morningside Heights”	pp. 10-17
III. Morningside Heights Overview	pp. 18-24
Outdated Zoning Laws and Luxury Overdevelopment = Gentrification, Rent-Burden, Excessive Density, and Stress on Infrastructure	
<i>Appendix A: MHCC Platform</i>	p. 25
<i>Appendix B: Community Workshop “Flyer”</i>	p. 26
<i>Appendix C: Stakeholder Invitation Letter</i>	p. 27
<i>Appendix D: Invited Stakeholders List</i>	pp. 28-35
<i>Appendix E: Community Workshop Welcome Letter</i>	p. 36
<i>Appendix F: MHCC Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet</i>	p. 37
<i>Appendix G: Community Workshop Participant Worksheet</i>	pp. 38-39
<i>Appendix H: Community Workshop “Guidelines and Principles”</i> ..	pp. 40-43
<i>Appendix I: MHCC Report – Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment (“Soft Sites”)</i>	pp. 44-57

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community “Visioning” Workshop, facilitated and sponsored by the **Morningside Heights Community Coalition** on January 25, 2017 at Corpus Christi Church, was an opportunity for approximately 150 residents and stakeholders to discuss their community’s future, and consider implementing potential solutions, such as re-zoning, to ensure that neighborhood character is sustained; the local economy thrives; and middle-class and working-class residency and diversity remain viable now and for years to come.

Preceded by two other large community gatherings in June and September, the January 25 Workshop was prompted by the current and planned overdevelopment of luxury residential 32 and 40 story towers enabled through the sale of “air rights” by venerable Morningside institutions, the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), and the Union Theological Seminary (UTS). Additionally, over twenty other “soft sites” (empty lots, low-rise structures, vacant buildings) have been identified enabling luxury developers to take advantage of “as of right” zoning in Morningside, often combined with the unfettered purchase of “air rights,” to greatly exceed zoned height limits. Aside from casting shadows, blocking views and sunlight – the luxury towers cause area tax rates to rise, leading to higher rents, and displacement of long-time residents and small businesses.

Bordered by 110th Street and 125th Street, from Riverside Park to Morningside Park, (and dominated by local institutions such as Columbia University, Barnard College, St. Luke’s/Mt. Sinai, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Teachers College, Manhattan School of Music, Riverside Church, JTS, and UTS) Morningside is among the most densely populated, rapidly gentrifying New York neighborhoods. But only 7% (all in one building, the Enclave) of the estimated 1200 new apartments planned could be considered “affordable,” based on the current Area Median Income of \$90,600 for a family of four.

The Community Workshop participants’ voices were expressed and documented at the round-table discussions, through submitted written worksheets (*See Report Section II for direct quotes and evaluations*), and through the following summary “headlines” presented by a representative of each of the thirteen table groups at the end of the workshop:

Morningside Needs to Preserve "Small Town" Environment, Infrastructure. Maintain "Quality of Life"

Institutional Overdevelopment "Creating Dead Community"

"Truly Affordable" Housing Needed to Promote Diversity and Preserve Sense of Community

Schools Overcrowded, Underfunded -- Need a New School Built for the 21st Century

Apartment Rental Pricing Soaring -- Middle-Class Priced Out

Arts Funding Would Improve Quality of Life and Economic Growth

Greenspace Opportunities: Covering Subway Tracks -- "High Line" Type Park Reduces Noise, Creates an Attraction

Re-Zoning Needed to Promote Contextual Development, Limit Building Heights -- "What Happened to Aesthetics?"

Transportation Needs Upgrade -- More Buses, More Trains, Elevators for Elderly and Disabled, Improve 125th Street Station Conditions

Tall Towers Robbing Morningside of Light, Air, and Space

Overdevelopment Limiting Pedestrian Spaces, "Walkability"

"Mom and Pop" Stores Disappearing -- Luxury Housing Raising Rents

Construction Safety Plans Should Be Enforced -- Neighborhood Residents at Risk

Written concerns, comments and solutions from the submitted worksheets included the following examples:

"We need to maintain the unique feel and scale of Morningside Heights. The neighborhood – its parks, its landmarks and institutions, its locally owned stores and its low rise scale – are special in Manhattan and we don't want to lose them."

"Developers should contribute to neighborhood improvement by developing or enhancing schools, infrastructure, and services in exchange for constructing buildings that exceed a certain height, size and number of units."

The January 25th Workshop was attended and addressed by Councilmember Mark Levine, State Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell, and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, all of whom attended MHCC's prior community meetings, and endorse the goal of rezoning to promote reasonable development in Morningside Heights.

CONCLUSION

Morningside Heights remains a highly attractive, “as of right” zoning oasis for luxury developers, prompting the Workshop participants to express their concerns about the ongoing displacement of long-time residents and small businesses in their rapidly gentrifying area. Increasing density is placing additional stress on infrastructure and services; school resources; and already overcrowded subway cars, stations, and platforms. Participants felt that updating Morningside’s 1961 zoning laws could promote affordable housing, reasonable density, and development, while enforcing contextual architecture and limiting building heights.

In addition to modifying zoning laws, Workshop participants felt that Morningside’s local institutions and the developers should allocate some portion of both the “air rights” price and the construction budget to directly benefit the community – for example, to provide better subway access for the disabled, living-wage jobs, a new school, a senior center, and affordable housing. The process might take the form of a “Community Benefits Agreement,” for which there is local precedent.

The Workshop participants felt strongly that local government representatives and city agencies should work closely with the community to ensure the enactment and enforcement of updated zoning regulations, and the allocation of funding from wealthy developers for essential improvements needed in Morningside Heights.

I: Background and Organization of the Workshop

On January 25, 2017 residents and others with a stake in Morningside Heights gathered at a “Community Workshop” at Corpus Christi Church to consider the community’s future, with specific attention focused on controlling excessive development and the potential for modifying outdated local zoning regulations.

The Workshop was sponsored by the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC). This civic organization was founded in April 2016 in response to plans by developers to build luxury condominium towers of 32 and 40 stories respectively on the campuses of Jewish Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary on West 122nd Street. These two massive and inappropriate developments are part of 1,200 new apartments, 93 % at market rate, at eight sites slated for the Heights. Morningside Heights’ obsolete and generous zoning regulations, unchanged since 1961, the existence of numerous other potential development sites, and the strength of Manhattan’s real estate market, all but guarantee that developers will seek to build additional high-density luxury housing in the neighborhood.

In June 2016, the founders of the MHCC drafted a Platform for Residential Development in Morningside Heights, setting forth seven principles for growth in the neighborhood, including limits on the height and requiring a minimum share of affordable housing in new buildings, mitigating the adverse effects on the neighborhood and social and economic investment in the Heights by institutions and developers. *(See Appendix A: MHCC Platform for Residential Development in Morningside Heights)*

The MHCC’s January Workshop was preceded by two well-publicized community meetings at the Church, each of which attracted around 200 people. At the first meeting on June 20, the threat and consequences of development at the eight sites were discussed and the Platform was reviewed. At a second on September 19, a comprehensive and detailed survey of over 20 other “soft sites,” where additional high-density development could occur, was presented. Two committees – Action and Zoning – were then formed to carry out the work of the Coalition. The committees have since met regularly, with over 20 people at each session. *(See Appendix B: Flyer announcing the January 25th Community Meeting)*



O’Donnell *(seen here in picture at left addressing the Workshop)* and Manhattan

Borough President Gale Brewer, all of whom endorse the Coalition's goal of rezoning for reasonable development in the Heights.

Both committees played major roles in publicizing, planning and conducting the Workshop. Flyers were distributed on the street and in building lobbies, publicized on Facebook and on the MHCC website; multiple emails were sent to hundreds of residents; dozens of local merchants were invited as were other stakeholders, such



as public and private institutions and churches. Members of the Coalition were already experienced in reaching the community through the recent successful campaign to designate the first Morningside Heights historic district. *(See Appendix C: Letter of invitation for the Workshop, and Appendix D: Invited Stakeholders List)*

The Workshop was attended by 150 people, mainly residents, but also

including representatives from Community Board 9, Columbia University, Jewish and Union Theological Seminaries, elected officials' offices, the Morningside Area Alliance, and local schools. It was organized into small groups of 10-12 people at 13 tables to encourage discussion and thoughtful responses. A map showing where participants live and work indicates that they came from all parts of the Heights.



Every table had a volunteer facilitator, who had been trained in advance by an experienced facilitator, and a reporter to take notes. Each participant received a letter explaining the purpose and organization of the Workshop and a form for volunteering for one of the MHCC's committees. *(See Appendix E: Meeting Purpose and Appendix*

F: Volunteer Form) The heart of the Workshop material was a form listing various areas, such as housing, transportation, and public services, to guide the discussion and on which participants were asked to enter their priorities and comments. *(See Appendix G: Community Workshop Worksheet Form)*

After about 45 minutes of discussion, each table announced its participants' most important conclusions, termed "headlines," and shown in Section II of this report, and the completed forms were collected for tabulation. A total of 81 forms were returned and over 20 more residents volunteered to serve on the Coalition's committees. The notes from each table and the completed forms are the basis for the Workshop's findings presented in Section II of the report.



Explanatory material was displayed at the Workshop. Enlargements of the Coalition's Platform (*See Appendix H: Guidelines and Principles*) were on the walls, as was the extensive survey of soft sites" (*See Appendix I: MHCC Report – Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment*), a map of the eight sites now slated for development, and graphic illustrations of the condominium towers proposed by the Seminaries.



The photos of the Workshop – overall shots and of individual tables – capture the enthusiasm and commitment of the participants.



II. Workshop Output: “Voices of Morningside Heights”

Table Discussions

There were 13 tables, each with between 10 and 12 active participants, facilitated by

community residents who had received training from a professional facilitator; discussions were animated and respectful, characterized by a common concern for the future of the neighborhood: participants overwhelmingly were in agreement on the need to preserve existing affordable housing and to develop new affordable housing; exert some public control over real estate development and limit the height of new buildings; ensure that city services are upgraded to accommodate the influx of new residents. In addition, participants offered other thoughtful recommendations for the future of the neighborhood.

Headlines

At the conclusion of the table discussions, representatives from each of the 13 tables presented headlines capturing the group discussion in a few words:

*Morningside Needs to Preserve "Small Town"
Environment, Infrastructure -- Maintain "Quality of Life"*

*Institutional Overdevelopment "Creating Dead
Community"*

*"Truly Affordable" Housing Needed to Promote Diversity
and Preserve Sense of Community*

*Schools Overcrowded, Underfunded -- Need a New
School Built for the 21st Century*

Apartment Rental Pricing Soaring -- Middle-Class Priced Out

Arts Funding Would Improve Quality of Life and Economic Growth

Greenspace Opportunities: Covering Subway Tracks -- "High Line" Type Park Reduces Noise, Creates an Attraction

Re-Zoning Needed to Promote Contextual Development, Limit Building Heights -- "What Happened to Aesthetics?"

Transportation Needs Upgrade -- More Buses, More Trains, Elevators for Elderly and Disabled, Improve 125th Street Station Conditions

Tall Towers Robbing Morningside of Light, Air, and Space

Overdevelopment Limiting Pedestrian Spaces, "Walkability"

"Mom and Pop" Stores Disappearing -- Luxury Housing Raising Rents

Construction Safety Plans Should Be Enforced -- Neighborhood Residents at Risk

Summary: Table Discussions and Worksheet Comments

The worksheets, as might be expected, reflected the discussion at the tables. (See Appendix G: Community Workshop Worksheet) Worksheets were distributed to all entrants (approximately 130 distributed, and 81 returned). The following are the total number of responses participants chose to provide and submit for each

category presented on their personal “worksheet.” The worksheets were submitted anonymously, unless participants chose to enter “Name” and “Email” address in the spaces provided. (34 out of 81 provided some form of contact information).

68 commented on *“What Is Most Important to You?”*

61 commented on *Housing*

54 commented on *Building Heights/Views*

35 commented on *Schools*

39 commented on *Preservation/Landmarks*

37 commented on *Transportation*

33 commented on *Economic Development*

26 commented on *Community & Cultural Resources*

18 commented on *Municipal Services: Police, Fire, EMS*

28 commented on *Environment*

17 commented on *Additional Topics*

Morningside Heights residents expressed a common sense that the unique character of their neighborhood is of great value, and that new luxury high-rise developments threaten that character.

“Institutions in Morningside Heights are creating a ‘dead community’.”

“Morningside Heights grew up due to the Cathedral of St. John, The Roosevelt/St. Luke’s Hospital, Columbia University, and should always be associated with these institutions.”

“We need to preserve the sense of neighborhood in Morningside Heights, including diversity in all areas -- age, race, economic, ethnicity.”

“Morningside Heights is a remaining small town in New York City. Desirable features of our neighborhood are parks and community feeling. We fear that the construction of large new buildings will destroy the quality of the neighborhood.”

“Increased density in Morningside Heights means more and better upkeep of both Morningside and Riverside Parks.”

“This is already one of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the country. It is irresponsible to allow unfettered development to continue.”



"We need to maintain the unique feel and scale of Morningside Heights. The neighborhood – its parks, its landmarks and institutions, its locally owned stores and its low rise scale – are special in Manhattan and we don't want to lose them."

Participants recognized the need to preserve affordable housing and to build new housing affordable to young people seeking to stay in the neighborhood and to newcomers other than the wealthy.

"Keep and preserve Public Housing. Preserve and increase diversity."

"Housing should be diverse and affordable divided into 40% lower income, 40% middle income and the remaining being higher income."

"Utilize existing spaces for arts/theater/cultural opportunities and residences for artists."

"Create as much rent-regulated housing as needed to serve long-term residents as well as students and newcomers."

"There should be a minimum low-income housing requirement in new construction."



"I raised my daughter here, and now she cannot afford it."

"Rising costs of housing affects whether students can continue to live in the area after they graduate."

"Young people coming out of college can't afford to live on their own, they must live with parents."

"Gentrification is happening – beyond anything we have seen."

Pictured: Columbia and Barnard Students from the Roosevelt Institute participated in the Community Workshop.

Participants cited particular neighborhood problems including:

- Pedestrian safety
 - Noise from ambulances going to and from Mt Sinai/St Luke's Hospital
 - Crowded #1 subway stations with lack of access for disabled people and non-working escalators
 - Overcrowded buses
 - Lack of quality schools
 - Need for more parking.
- Positive note: Several residents noted that the neighborhood is safer now than in the past. (An overall reduction in crime has been recorded in Morningside Heights, and throughout New York City.)

Participants often cited a need for action to require “give backs” from developers and institutions to fund neighborhood projects, and enable current low and middle-income residents to stay in their homes.

“Give-backs” from developers and institutions:

“Developers should contribute to neighborhood improvement by developing or enhancing schools, infrastructure, and services in exchange for constructing buildings that exceed a certain height, size and number of units.”

“There should be a ‘Community Benefits Agreement’ with public participation on the participatory budgeting model to determine the allocation of resources.”

“Institutions have a moral obligation to ‘pay back’ for community acceptance. There should be a community/institution development forum, rather than allow the institutions to impose their economic priorities.”

Along these lines, participants cited specific needs that could be funded and developed using “give backs” to the Morningside community:

- Senior centers: To be included in new buildings or existing ones
- Senior subsidies: To benefit an aging population and enable residents to “age-in-place.” *“We are a neighborhood with many older people. Seniors shouldn’t have to leave their homes of decades because rents/maintenance, and items in stores are becoming unaffordable.”*

- Quality schools: More resources and supplies for existing schools, and new school construction to relieve severe over-capacity.
- Child care centers and playgrounds: To attract and meet the needs of families
- Support of 'Green Spaces' and existing gardens: Numerous public gardens are threatened by overdevelopment
- Green roofs in new structures: Morningside Heights as an energy efficient showcase neighborhood.
- Jobs for people who live in the neighborhood: *"The construction jobs at the buildings should be union jobs, and hire local residents; for example Grant Houses residents could get training for this."*
- Retain small businesses: Promote new "mom and pop" stores, limit period of time a storefront can remain vacant, and introduce "Pop-Up" stores to fill vacant storefronts.
- Transit Improvements: Elevator access for the disabled, escalators, expanded subway platforms to relieve overcrowding due to higher neighborhood density. *"Transportation is already overburdened in the area and will need massive updating to accommodate growth."*

Some participants offered more comprehensive "vision" solutions, combining categories and new ideas to suggest long-term sustainable plans.

"Rezoning to ensure low buildings, preserving the low-rise, residential, unique character of the diverse Morningside neighborhood, and enhancing its mix of small business and capacity to be a showcase green community, accessible to mixed incomes."

"Preserving small local establishments and discouraging big box stores is key. Preserving historic facades is essential to the character of the neighborhood. New construction, if needed, must complement existing styles."

"Retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency and zero carbon or other advanced energy technologies – very appropriate green leadership for the Columbia neighborhood."

"Extend the Historic District to all Morningside Heights."¹

¹ Morningside Heights Historic District, covering approximately 115 buildings in the area between 110th Street and 116th Street, is in the final stages of approval.

Long-time Morningside Heights residents shared personal details and observations. Here are some examples:

Rosemary has been employed at both Union Theological Seminary (UTS) and Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and hates the idea of “doubling” the population and what it would mean in terms of crowding for shopping and buses.

Elise works at St. Luke’s Hospital and has lived in Morningside Heights for over 50 years. Her children attend neighborhood schools and she “wants to see it preserved as the same kind of neighborhood where I raised my kids.”

Liz has lived in Morningside Heights since 1968 and works at UTS. She finds it a “wonderful neighborhood” that is “spectacularly located,” and worries that “too many people, particularly wealthy” are moving in resulting in a “lack of community spirit.” “I treasure the views and the architecture really gets to me.” She objects to some of the newer buildings, such as the Teachers College dormitory on 121st Street, and Columbia’s Northwest Science Building (Broadway at 120th Street), which she feels do not fit in the architectural character of earlier buildings.

Doris has worked in Morningside Heights since 2001 and dislikes the development around the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. She already feels changes in that area including greater crowding on the streets and rising rents. “The people are not the same any more” with more affluent residents moving in.

Bemshi is a musician who has lived on Claremont Avenue for 42 years, having moved from the West Village because Morningside Heights was “quiet, pretty and had a park.” “I raised my daughter here, and now she cannot afford it” and has moved to Washington Heights. She expressed concern about a long pattern of broken promises from Columbia University in its interactions with the neighboring community. For her, “the noise and vibration of new construction [at the Manhattanville Campus] are a public health issue” that is not being adequately addressed. She worries about the stress on the neighborhood infrastructure and worries about “crowding on the #1 train, the only subway line serving the neighborhood,” and the fact that the M4 bus is slow. She noted that services like laundromats are disappearing as well as affordable restaurants. “Not everyone can afford Pisticci’s, as much as I like it,” she bemoaned. She feels a growing “lack of sense of community,” and an “alienating sense of entitlement from new residents.” She finds as rents go up, fewer residents greet one another in their buildings.

Alice has lived in “the Appletree building” [120th and Amsterdam] since 1983 and noted that her husband is on the faculty at Columbia so some of her issues are different but she said she had heard echoes of her own concerns from around the table. She said she wanted to make one point, that “change will come but it should be good change

and we should capitalize on that. Alice noted that a good change in Morningside Heights since she moved in is the greater safety in the parks, especially Morningside Park, which was “unwalkable in 1983.” She has seen “immense improvements” in the neighborhood over the last 30 years. She is now worried that new residential towers “will block sunlight and lead to more crowded trains and buses.”

Jennifer has lived in Morningside Heights since 1996. She felt that if only chain stores come into Morningside Heights, they may offer lower wages as well as having tough last-minute work schedules for employees, all of which make it more difficult for residents of Morningside Heights to find local good-paying jobs. One of the special advantages of Morningside Heights is that many can live within walking distance of their places of work, but this may change as the economic and residential nature of the neighborhood changes through development.

Overall, the discussions presented a clear capacity for an organized community able to express the multifaceted needs of Morningside Heights and advocate for its interests.

III: Morningside Heights Overview: Outdated Zoning Laws and Luxury Overdevelopment = Gentrification, Rent Burden, Excessive Density, and Stress on Infrastructure

The residents and stakeholders of Morningside Heights strongly expressed their deep concerns and aspirations during the roundtable discussions held at the Community Visioning Workshop on January 25, 2017 at Corpus Christi Church. Reading from the “Headlines” that were generated at the workshop, the community strongly believes the stress and impact of luxury overdevelopment, high-rise towers, soaring rents, displacement of residents, neglect of seniors, rising tax rates, declining small businesses, declining schools, overburdened infrastructure and transportation – are all leading to the steady erosion of the fabric and historic character of Morningside Heights.

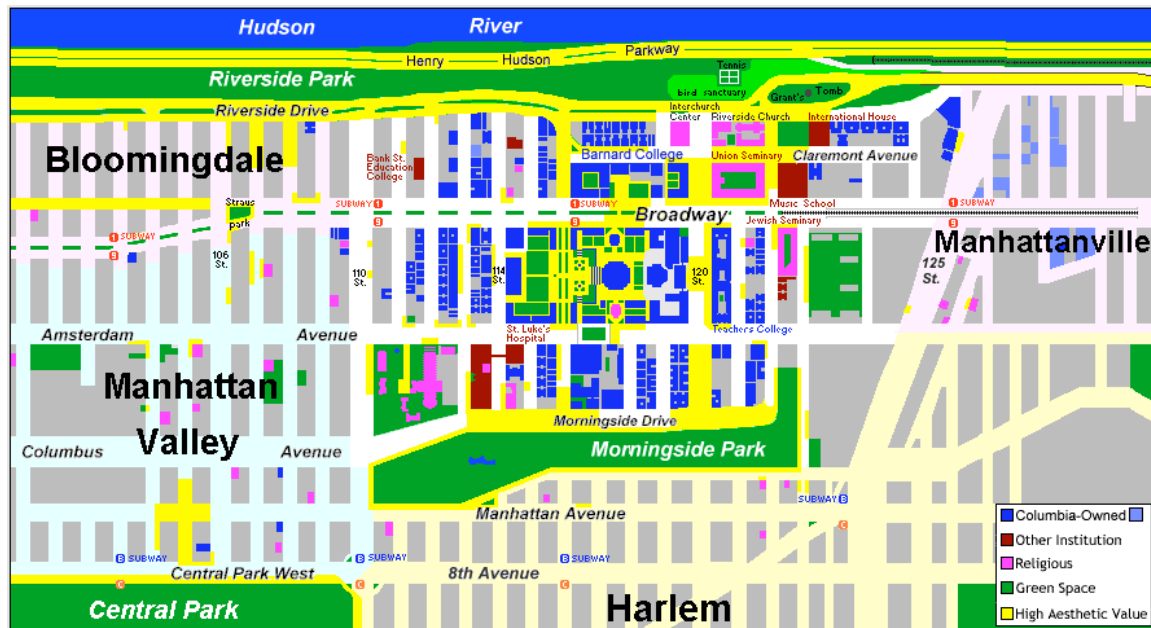
A Brief History of Morningside Heights

Morningside Heights is graced with the highest concentration of institutional complexes built in a relatively short period at the turn of the 20th century, both in the city and anywhere in the United States. It is home to monumental places of worship, higher learning and healing, which accentuate its backdrop of rowhouses and apartment buildings, culminating in streetscapes that are both elegant and eye-filling. Topographically, it is situated on a plateau historically known as Harlem Heights, while geographically it is bounded by West 110th Street to the south, West 125th Street to the north, and two Frederick Law Olmsted– designed parks to the east (Morningside Park) and to the west (Riverside Park).

The introduction of the subway into Morningside Heights in 1904, coupled with the neighborhood’s magnificent parks and prestigious institutions, led to a frenzy of speculative apartment house construction, attracting middle-class residents who could now commute directly downtown to work. Even before the advent of zoning regulations for land use, developers erected rowhouses and modest apartment buildings on the side streets and grand apartment houses on the avenues, with particularly monumental examples on Riverside Drive, Claremont Avenue and Cathedral Parkway, and mixed-use commercial buildings along Broadway, giving the neighborhood a heterogeneous yet cohesive character. Morningside Heights’ unorthodox yet distinctive sense of place comes from the coexistence of residential and institutional clusters, as exemplified by elegant rowhouses and apartment buildings just steps away from renowned academic institutions and houses of worship.

Today the neighborhood still enjoys this singular sense of place. Its institutions are impressive examples of Beaux-Arts planning and design, including the graceful

approach to Grant's Tomb, the entrance façades of St. John the Divine and Riverside Church aligned with the axes of 112th Street and 122nd Street, and especially Charles McKim's plan for Columbia University, whose symmetry and axial layout emphasize the monumentality and unity of the surrounding architecture. The residential architecture, though sometimes grand, offers a human scale and balance to the whole neighborhood.²



NOTE: On February 21, 2017, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designated a large portion of Morningside Heights as a Historic District -- over 115 buildings including those from 110th to 116th Streets, and up to 119th Street along Claremont Avenue and Riverside Drive. The designation may slow overdevelopment in this area, but large strips along Broadway outside of the new “Historic District” remain vulnerable, and the area from 116th to 125th Street, which may be considered for future approval by the Commission, is currently ripe for overdevelopment.

Morningside Heights: “As of right” Zoning Oasis for Luxury Developers

Long-time Morningside Heights residents cherish their institutions, architecture, and “quality of life” seeking to preserve the community’s rich heritage and character. But the area is rapidly gentrifying, and rents are rising. These conditions are in large part attributable to Morningside’s attractiveness to luxury developers seeking to take advantage of “as of right” zoning.

“As of right” allows developers to execute the unfettered purchase of what are known as “air rights” (using the unused rights from an adjacent site to build a larger building) and greatly exceed the height limits set by zoning regulations dating to 1961, without seeking permission from the City Planning Commission, the City Council, or the local community. The “Mandatory Inclusionary Housing” law,

² from the Six to Celebrate Series – Historic District Council, c. 2013
MHCC – Community “Visioning” Workshop Report
March 1, 2017

which requires developers to provide affordable apartments when exceeding certain zoning restrictions, does not apply in an “as of right” zone where “air rights” are available for purchase.

Several years ago, residents of the neighborhood just south of Morningside Heights were outraged when two soaring glass towers, the Ariel West (31 stories) and Ariel East (37 stories) were erected by the Extell Development Company on Broadway and 99th Street. Working with local officials, community activists managed to achieve the passage in 2012 of a special-purpose zoning designation to limit future construction heights, and regulate commercial development. The same year, the area north of Morningside, West Harlem, was officially rezoned to accommodate the negotiated expansion of the new Columbia University campus while ensuring that low-rise, mid-block buildings were preserved in most areas and that affordable housing would be mandated for buildings exceeding zoned height limits. Today, Morningside Heights, sandwiched between these two re-zoned areas, has become an “as of right” oasis for luxury developers who can purchase available “air rights” and greatly exceed contextual building height, offering little or no affordable housing.

Aside from casting shadows and blocking views and sunlight, when a luxury high-rise is built in a middle-class and working-class community, real estate taxes are eventually assessed at a higher rate for the entire area. In turn, local landlords charge higher rents and may try to pressure rent-regulated tenants to leave. Owners of buildings that contain commercial space raise rents on small business owners or refuse to renew their leases in the hope of attracting higher-paying chain stores or banks. A number of small Morningside Heights merchants are on month-to-month leases, and many storefronts are deliberately being kept empty. New residents filling large towers place additional stress on community services (police, fire), transportation (subway crowding and overflowing platforms), and already neglected schools. The character, fabric, and quality of middle-class neighborhood life deteriorates.

Morningside Heights mean income is \$65,700, ranking 100 out of 117 neighborhoods included in the upper 20th percentile of New York neighborhoods (\$14,600 below the mean). At 68,240 residents per square mile, it is ranked 21 out of 118 in highest density (just behind the West Village and ahead of High Bridge and the South Bronx) when included in the survey with Hamilton Heights. Children, ages 0-17 make up only 11%, ranking 105 out of 118 neighborhoods, just behind the Upper Eastside, and ahead of Little Italy. The non-white population is 52.8%, divided evenly between Black, Asian and Hispanic, similar to the rest of Manhattan.³

³ Statistical Atlas – Morningside Heights – April 2015

But recent and planned residential developments are in great conflict with Morningside demographics. Of the approximately 1200 new apartments already built or due to go online in the next few years, MHCC estimates that only 7% could be considered affordable (all in one building, the Enclave) under the guidelines of the current AMI (Area Median Income) of \$90,600 for a family of four, which includes areas outside of the five boroughs, including Westchester County.

According to the Furman Center report: *Focus on Gentrification (2015) Morningside Heights*, which includes Hamilton Heights, is among the fastest gentrifying neighborhoods in New York.⁴ The study data collected between 2010 and 2014 shows a rise in rent of 36.7% between 2000 and 2010-2014, versus an average for New York City of 22.1%.

According to the Furman report, “recently available rental units became less affordable to low-income households in all neighborhoods, but particularly in gentrifying neighborhoods. In 2000, citywide, the median renter household could afford 20.2 percent of recently-available units; by 2010-2014, that share had fallen to just 13.3 percent. The largest decreases in affordability were for households earning 80 percent of AMI, especially in gentrifying neighborhoods. In 2000, 77.2 percent of recently-available rental units in gentrifying neighborhoods were affordable to households earning 80 percent of AMI. In 2010-2014, that share fell to less than half. Households at 80 percent of AMI saw smaller but still significant declines in affordability in other neighborhoods too.”⁵

According to the report, the share of recently available rental units affordable to low-income household declined sharply in gentrifying neighborhoods between 2000 and 2010-2014. And the share of low-income households (those earning between 50 and 80 percent of AMI) that were rent-burdened in gentrifying neighborhoods increased by 21% while the share of rent-burdened moderate income household increased by 18% during the same period.

Morningside Heights rents increased 7.7% (1990-2000), but surged 26.7% (2000-2010-2014), while incomes increased at a far slower rate, dropping from 9.5% to 7.6% during the same period.

Long-time residents are rent-burdened by the real estate luxury overdevelopment boom that has arrived in rapidly gentrifying, densely populated Morningside Heights. And the evidence continues to rise all around us.

⁴ Note: The Furman Center Report, and other available research reports, does not isolate Morningside Heights data.

⁵ Furman Center Report: Focus on Gentrification, 2015

- Union Theological Seminary, located between 120th and 122nd Street, is proposing to co-develop a condominium tower located on the campus's quadrangle. The seminary would sell 350,000 square feet of "*air rights*," which would go towards a slender tower, potentially rising 35 to 40 stories.⁶ Union's president, the Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, maintains that as much as \$150 million is required to renovate the campus. "We're a New York City institution " Dr. Jones has said, "and we have a New York City-sized problem. But fortunately we also have a New York City-sized answer. God is calling us to have another 100 years and '*air rights*' are the answer to that call."⁷
- Jewish Theological Seminary at 3080 Broadway sold a parcel of land to the developer Savanna which is building a 250,000 square-foot luxury condominium 32-story structure. Savanna paid \$77 million for the land, and "*air rights*." The seminary is using the money to renovate existing space and add new facilities, including a performing-arts center, library, and residence hall.⁸
- As a recently declared landmark (February 21, 2017), given its location, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine can sell its ""*air rights*"" to developers seeking to build across 110th street, but no deal has yet been announced. But in 2003, the church identified, in consultation with the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission, two development sites that were both offered to developers under 99-year leases. In 2008, AvalonBay communities developed the Avalon Morningside with 295 rental units, 20% of which are designated "affordable" which limits tenant income to \$23,000 a year. Recent market rate unit listings (2/26/17) are \$3,800 for a one-bedroom and \$7,200 for a two-bedroom. The church receives around \$2.5 million yearly from the developer for the Avalon. The second site, The Enclave, generating \$3 million yearly for the church, has 428 units, with 87 units designated "affordable."
- Nearby, St. Luke's Hospital sold 1080 Amsterdam Avenue (20 stories) in 2015 for \$29.1 million. The building had provided affordable housing to the hospital staff before conversion to all luxury housing (now called The Stonehenge) with studios starting at \$2,795, 1 bedrooms at \$3,575, and 2 bedrooms at \$5,995.
- A few blocks over, on 30 Morningside Avenue, the developer Delshah paid \$111.5 million to Mount Sinai/St. Luke's for five hospital buildings (two of which are landmarked) to be converted to 200 all-luxury rentals. Delshah is seeking to receive federal 20% historic preservation tax credits, totaling over

⁶ YIMBY – December 15, 2015

⁷ New York Times – December 11, 2015

⁸ The Real Deal – February 1, 2016

\$20 million, for the development costs in return for maintaining the landmark facades.

- Existing rental buildings are being sold or renovated as luxury units, displacing long-time residents. Three contiguous buildings, 3143-3149 Broadway, are on the market for \$48 million, with current average rents of \$3000 per unit. In another sale, The Orbach group paid \$19 million to the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) (part of their real estate and “air rights” sale) for 415 W. 120th Street, a seven-story 1910 student residence, built of Harvard brick and Indiana limestone, that is being demolished to make way for a 15 story luxury rental. JTS has also sold 3060 Broadway, a nine-story student dormitory with several ground-floor small businesses (barber shop, copy shop, coffee shop, deli) to eventually be converted to market rate housing by Coltown Properties.
- **Soft-Sites:** Additionally, The Morningside Heights Community Coalition has identified more than 20 local “soft sites” -- vulnerable real estate parcels with at least one of the following distinctions: low-rise, tenant-free, nonresidential, vacant and/or with available “air rights” with lots large enough for development, which in turn enable developers to build large towers inconsistent with the surrounding area and to create luxury rentals and condos beyond what the community can afford. It is just a matter of time and opportunity as to when local landlords and institutions will sell or develop these parcels or their “air rights” (*See Appendix I: Primary Sites in Morningside Heights Vulnerable to Overdevelopment*).
- **Transportation:** As the Community Workshop participants raised during their roundtable discussions, Morningside’s subway station platforms are often overcrowded and are inaccessible by the elderly and disabled. Costly improvements such as new escalators at 125th Street and the installation of elevators at the 110th and 116th stations, are essential. Real estate developers should be required to provide transit improvements in exchange for expanded FAR (Floor Area Ratio), as in other neighborhood areas. Significant new high-density developments resulting in an estimated 1200 new apartment units should trigger a mandatory transportation analysis by City Planning. The minimum number of units requiring analysis is 200 for Zone 2 (Manhattan north of 110th Street). ⁹ City Planning should undertake the study and work to enforce laws requiring that developers contribute to transit, and other transportation improvements needed based on the resulting impact analysis.
- **Schools:** Schools are overcrowded and outdated. For example, the top-performing Teachers College Community School has a capacity of 131, but

⁹ CEQR Technical Manual – Transportation p. 16-3, March 2014
MHCC – Community “Visioning” Workshop Report
March 1, 2017

has an enrollment of 273, or 208 percent over capacity. But parents say that the DOE's plan of placing some students from other schools in nearby P.S. 36 only worsens a situation where students are already struggling with limited resources.¹⁰

- **Community Amenities:** Centers are needed for seniors in a community with a large percentage of residents who are "aging-in-place." Stairs that provide access to both Riverside and Morningside Parks are crumbling. Continuing overdevelopment of densely-populated apartment towers without upgrading infrastructure will worsen the situation

Conclusion and Next Steps

Updating Morningside's 1961 zoning laws could promote affordable housing, reasonable density, and development, while enforcing contextual architecture and limiting building heights. But in the meantime, neighborhood tax rates are rising, long-time residents are being displaced, subways are more crowded and infrastructure is stressed.

One helpful way to provide some balance is to allocate some portion of both the "air rights" price and the developer's construction costs to directly benefit the community – for example, to provide better subway access for the disabled, living-wage jobs, a new school, a senior center, and affordable housing. The process might take the form of a "Community Benefits Agreement," for which there is local precedent in the case of Columbia's expansion into West Harlem, and which has been executed in other New York neighborhoods and other cities. This would not in itself prevent (without new zoning restrictions) the current erection of luxury towers, but at least the community would realize certain benefits from their arrival.

And longer-range solutions are also required, because if steps are not taken to remedy this situation, Morningside Heights will suffer from the displacement of long-time residents and businesses and increased stress on local infrastructure and services, while major developers and real estate fund managers are handsomely rewarded. Morningside Heights residents need zoning updates enacted, and compensation to fund essential improvements from wealthy developers, and the local institutions reaping financial windfalls from the sale of property and "air rights." These are not wishful neighborhood aspirations; they should be supported by our local government and city agencies "as of right."

¹⁰ DNA Info – February 16, 2017

APPENDIX A: MHCC PLATFORM

MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION PLATFORM FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS

Manhattan's residential real estate boom has arrived in Morningside Heights. Two luxury rental projects have recently been completed: the 428- apartment Enclave on West 113th Street and the Stonehenge with 96 apartments on Amsterdam Avenue. St. Luke's Hospital is selling four vacant buildings for \$115 million for conversion into hundreds of high-rent apartments. Jewish Theological Seminary recently sold the rights to build a luxury condominium tower of up to 40 stories on West 122nd Street to the Savanna Real Estate Fund for \$ 77 million and sold buildings at 3060 Broadway and 415 West 120th Street, with a total of 86 apartments, to investors for \$54 million. Union Theological Seminary is planning to sell the rights to build a condominium of up to 42 stories on its campus.

Neighborhood organizations want to make sure that the planned developments do not harm the Heights and in fact offer real benefits to the neighborhood, its families and public services. Our platform for residential development consists of seven features.

Height Consistent With Nearby Buildings

The height of new buildings should be consistent with their neighbors. In the cases of Jewish Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary they should not exceed the Manhattan School of Music and the Teachers College residences, which are each 18 floors.

Exteriors Harmonize With Surrounding Buildings

The exteriors of new buildings should be of the same or similar materials, mainly stone or brick, as buildings in their immediate vicinity.

Views of Nearby Landmarks Preserved

The views of nearby landmarks, such as Riverside Church and the UTS tower, should not be blocked by new buildings nor should they cast intrusive shadows.

Mitigate the Impact on the Environment and Local Services.

Mitigate any adverse impacts of new development, especially its cumulative effects. This includes transportation, parking, schools and other public services, shopping, resident displacement as well as air quality, sanitation and noise during and after construction.

Provide Affordable Housing

At least 30% of the apartments in the buildings or in nearby locations should be designated permanent affordable housing.

Support Local Social and Economic Development

Institutions and developers that will benefit from the planned housing should invest in local social and economic ventures. This might include education and employment for youngsters, assistance for seniors, aiding local businesses and reusing the gate house on Amsterdam.

Rezoning Morningside Heights

The neighborhood's zoning should be revised to encourage appropriate development in terms of land use and the height and bulk of buildings.

In addition, guiding practices for building construction should stress well-paid jobs, training and local business opportunities.

For more information: morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.com

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP “FLYER”



40-Story Tower at UTS
On 122nd Street



32-Story Savanna Tower
at JTS on 122nd Street



15-Story Tower at 411
West 120th Street

Three luxury apartment towers are already planned

STOP OVERDEVELOPMENT!

**TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT OUR
NEIGHBORHOOD**

COME TO A COMMUNITY WORKSHOP TO PLAN
THE REZONING OF MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS
We need you... and your ideas

Wednesday, January 25th at 6:30 PM
Corpus Christi Church
529 W 121st Street (East of Broadway)

Sponsored by the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC)
Morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.com
Contact: Info@morningsideheights.org

APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER INVITATION LETTER

MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION

P. O. Box 250405 Columbia University Station

New York, NY 10025

info@morningsideheights.org

January 4, 2017

INVITATION TO JANUARY 25 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION

Dear Stakeholder in Morningside Heights:

The Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC) cordially invites you to a **Community Visioning Workshop** to consider the future of the Heights. It will be held on **Wednesday, January 25 at 6:30 pm at Corpus Christi Church, 529 West 121st Street**, east of Broadway.

The Coalition was formed in the spring of 2016 in the wake of widespread concern that the Heights is being threatened by overdevelopment, such as the luxury condominium towers planned on West 122nd Street at Jewish and Union Theological Seminaries. Surveys by the Coalition showed that more than 20 other "soft sites" are also vulnerable to overdevelopment.

In response to these imminent threats, MHCC sponsored two community forums in June and September of 2016, each attended by over 200 residents.

At these forums it became clear that drastic changes in the character of the Heights could only be addressed by modernizing its obsolete zoning regulations, which date from 1961. Rezoning for reasonable development would also enable the Heights to take account of its needs for additional facilities and services and to preserve what distinguishes the neighborhood. We are already working on the rezoning with city agencies and it is strongly supported by our local elected officials.

At the Workshop on January 25, residents, merchants, developers, representatives from churches, educational institutions, schools and other parties will gather to talk about the future of the community we share. The discussions, mainly in small groups, will be based on the attached Principles and Guidelines prepared by the Coalition.

We look forward to your active participation in the Workshop and would ask that you RSVP to let us know if you will be attending. You can send your email reply to: RNRETS@aol.com

Sincerely,
Laura Friedman, President

APPENDIX D: INVITED STAKEHOLDER LIST

At several committee meetings, the MHCC Zoning Committee determined the following list of Stakeholders were significant in developing an inclusive Vision for the Morningside Heights community. The names in parentheses are the MHCC members who suggested and/or contacted the invitee. (PERSONAL CONTACT INFORMATION HAS BEEN DELETED)

Grant Houses

Carlton Davis Sr. (B. Weinberg)
Tenant Association President,
55 LaSalle Street NY, NY 10027

Community Board 9 (B. Weinberg)

info@cb9m.org

Teachers College

Thomas James (L. Grimes)
Dean of Teachers College

Janice Robinson (L. Grimes)
Dean for Diversity

Nancy Streim (L. Grimes)
VP for School and Community Partnerships

Columbia University

Columbia University (H. Schwartz)
Lee Bollinger, President
Low Library
535 West 116th Street
New York, NY 10027

Maxine Griffith (H. Schwartz)
Executive VP for Community Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations
Low Library
535 West 116th Street
New York, NY 10027

Roosevelt Institute – Columbia Students

Rachel Knowles (R. Stern)

Ali Freeman (R. Stern)

Connor Haseley (R. Stern)

GRANT’S TOMB (E. Sullivan)

Mailing address:
General Grant National Memorial
122nd Street and Riverside Drive
New York, NY 10027

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE (E. Sullivan)

Mailing addresss:

500 Riverside Drive

New York, NY 10027-3916

The President's Office:

Calvin Sims

President & CEO

Michael Walter

Special Assistant to the President

Admissions, Programs & Resident Life Office (mostly deals with admissions, events and activities for residents):

[Carla Fernandez-Soto](#)

Manager of Programs & Resident Life

Teacher's College

Block Associations

115-116 Streets Block Association (H. Schwartz)

c/o Harry Schwartz

50 Morningside Drive #31

New York NY 10025

Co-op Boards

Mark McDougle (R. Stern)

President

390 Riverside Drive

New York, NY 10025

545 West 111th St. (S. Stroud)

Nathaniel Polish, President of co-op (apt.8)]

president of Daedelus Technology

managing agent:

A.J. Rexhepi

Century Management Services

440 9th Ave., 15th Floor

NY, NY 10001

La Touraine Apartments (H. Schwartz)

50 Morningside Drive

New York NY 10025

c/o Robert Farrell, Pres.

Mt. Cenis Apartments (H. Schwartz)

54 Morningside Drive

New York, NY 10025

Judy Thoms

Toby Golick

Leta Weintraub (D. Robinson)

Board of Directors President

Spencer Apartments

523 West 121st St #43

New York, NY 10027

Schools (Private and Public)

The Cathedral School
Columbia Sciences

P.S. 036 Margaret Douglas School (M036) (L. Grimes)
123 Morningside Drive (at Amsterdam Avenue
Manhattan, NY 10027
(212) 690-5807
Grades PK, 0K, 01, 02, 04, 05
District 5
Principal – Ms. Heather JnBaptist
Parent Coordinator - Ms. Lisa Flores (L. Grimes)

P.S. 125 Ralph Bunche School (M125) (L. Grimes)
425 West 123rd Street (between Amsterdam Avenue and Manhattan Avenue)
Manhattan, NY
10027
Grades PK. OK, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05
District 05
Principal – Ms. Claudetta Lustin
P.S. 125 Ralph Bunche School continued.
Parent Coordinator – Ms. Griselda Hernandez

KIPP STAR College Prep Charter School (M726) (L. Grimes)
[KIPP, the Knowledge is Power Program, is a nationwide network of public charter schools with
several elementary, middle and college prep high schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem and
Washington Heights.
433 West 123rd Street
Manhattan, NY 10027
Grades 0K, 01, 02, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12
District 05
Principal of KIPP Star Elementary School– Ms. Stacy Johnson

Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science and Engineering (M362) (L. Grimes)
425 West 123rd Street [shares a building with PS 125]
Manhattan, NY 10027
Grades 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12
District 05
Parent Coordinator – Ms. Andi Vaida Velasquez (L. Grimes)
Head of School Leadership Team – Mr. Kevin Daly

Corpus Christi (MACU) (L. Grimes)
535 West 121st Street
Manhattan, NY 10027
Grade: PK
District 3
Principal – Mr. Christian Mariano
cmariano@ccschoolnyc.org
[Corpus Christi School is a Catholic school covering grades PK through 8. I
am not sure why the listing of the NYC public schools includes its PK division
and I could not find out what “MACU” stands for.]

Virginia Connor, Head of School (S. Stroud)
St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School

Miriam Nightengale (S. French)
Principal
Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science and Engineering
425 West 123rd Street
NYC 10027

Mr. Reginald Higgins (05M125) (S. French)
Principal PS 125

Dr. Sanayl Becklee-Canton (S. French)
Director of Family Services
Lutheran Social Services
475 Riverside Drive Suite 1244
10115

Miriam Nightengale (S. French)
Principal
Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science and Engineering
425 W 123rd Street
Ralph Bunche Campus

Kevin Daly (S. French)

St. Lukes/Mt. Sinai
Arthur A. Gianelli (L. Friedman)
President
Mount Sinai, St. Luke's
1111 Amsterdam Ave.
NY., NY 10025

Marian Y. Scott, MS (L. Friedman)
Director, Community Health
Mount Sinai St. Luke's
555 W. 57th Street, Suite 5 - 43
NY, NY 10019

Small Businesses
Mr. Larry LEVI (L. Grimes)
Owner (co-owner?) of Appletree Market
1225 Amsterdam Avenue (between 120th and 121st Streets)
New York, NY 10027

Ms. Thaon PHAN (L. Grimes)
Owner of Hartley Pharmacy
1219 Amsterdam Avenue (@ 120th Street)
New York, NY 10027

Mr. Jorge ALVARADO (L. Grimes)
Owner of Vino Fino Wine Shop
1252 Amsterdam Avenue (between 121st and 122nd Streets)
Note: Mr. Alvarado is also the superintendent at 423 W 120th Street,
a Columbia University building

International Wines & Spirits (H. Schwartz)
2903 Broadway
New York NY 100025
Manager: Katia
Nancy Phillips, Pres

Hamilton Delicatessen (H. Schwartz)
1129 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10025
Mgr: nick ,Steve

University Housewares (H. Schwartz)
2901 Broadway
New York, Ny 10025
Owner: Bob

Strokos Delicatesen (H. Schwartz)
1090 Amsterdam Avenue
New York NY 10025
Nick: Mgr

Morton-Williams Supermarket (H. Schwartz)
2941 Broadway
New York, NY 10025
Avi Kaner

Milano Market (H. Schwartz)
2892 Broadway
New York, NY 10025

West Side Market
2840 Broadway
New York NY 10025
Mgr: Nick

KURO KUMA (coffee shop at 121 LaSalle) (E. Sullivan)
Dave Jang, Owner

LILY (H. Schwartz)
P.O. Box 250402
Columbia University Station
New York NY 10025

Village Copier (H. Schwartz)
1181 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10027

The Vitamin Shoppe (H. Schwartz)
2841 Broadway
New York, NY 10025

Sweetgreen (H. Schwartz)
2937 Broadway New York NY 10025

DuaneReade by Walgreens (H. Schwartz)
2864 Broadway
New York, NY 10025

3139 Bway Wines & Liquors (H. Schwartz)
3139 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

Starbucks (corner Tiemann Place, New location (H. Schwartz)
3165 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Mgr: Yesenia

Bettalona Restaurant (H. Schwartz)
3143 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

The Mill Restaurant (H. Schwartz)
2895 Broadway
New York, NY 10015

Community Food and Juice (H. Schwartz)
2893 Broadway
New York, NY 10025

Kissaten Jin (H. Schwartz)
3187 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

Claremont Chemists (H. Schwartz)
3181 Broadway
New York, NY 10025
Steve Soon Cha, Pres

Jin Ramen Noodle Bar (H. Schwartz)
3183 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

Theological Institutions

Riverside Church
(C. Mayerson)

Fred Cox is very active on committees at Riverside Church and will know how to route our mail or act on it himself.

Jewish Theological Seminary (H. Schwartz)
3080 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Marc Gary, Executive Vice Chancellor

Union Theological Seminary (H. Schwartz)
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Rev. Dr. Serene Jones, President

Frederick A. Davie, M.Div.
Executive Vice-President
Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York
3041 Broadway at 121st Street
New York, NY 10027

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS

Delshah (Development at St Luke's)
Jeff Holmes
Jeff Bogino

Orbach Group 415 W 120
Efriam Friedman
Michael McKeon
Jaime Birman

Riverside Park Conservancy

President of the Riverside Park Conservancy and also the Parks Dept. Director of Riverside Park

Marie Ledoux
Recording Secretary

Morningside Heights - West Harlem Sanitation Coalition

100 La Salle Street, 19F
New York, NY 10027

Manhattan School of Music

Rebecca Charnow, Director (C. Mayerson)
Community Outreach Program, Manhattan School of Music.

Film and TV shoots in Morningside --- Mayors office of Film – Film Studios who need unique atmosphere of Morningside (L. Kostrinsky)

The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment is comprised of two divisions: the Office of Film, Theatre, and Broadcasting, and NYC Media.

Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) of Film and TV mayors office : Julie Menin

Libraries

Maggie Barbour (L. Friedman)
Library Manager
NYPL - Morningside Heights Library
2900 Broadway
New York, NY 10025

Nursing Homes

Jim Davis (L. Friedman)
President and CEO
Amsterdam Nursing Home aka Amsterdam Cares
1060 Amsterdam Ave
New York, NY
10025

Judith Fenster, M.S., L.N.H.A. (L. Friedman)

Senior VP and Administrator
Amsterdam Nursing Home aka Amsterdam Cares
1060 Amsterdam Ave
New York, NY
10025

Local Politicians

State Senator Bill Perkins (H. Schwartz)
NYS Office Building
163 West 125th Street
Suite 912
New York, NY 10027 contact: Philippe-Edner Marius

Council Member Mark Levine (L. Friedman)
Aya Keefe – Chief of Staff
500 W. 141 Street
NY, NY 10031

Assembly Member Daniel O'Donnell (L. Friedman)
Nicole Migliore
245 West 104th Street
NY, NY 10025

Borough President Gale Brewer (L. Friedman)
Jessica Mates – Chief of Staff
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor South

Member of Congress Jerrold Nadler (L. Friedman)
Robert Gottheim
201 Varick Street, Suite 669
NY, NY 10014

Member of Congress Adriano Espillat
David Baily
Deputy Chief of Staff, Community Affairs
NYS Senator Adriano Espillat
31st District
5030 Broadway, Suite 701
New York, NY 10034

Manhattan Borough President Office
Lucian Reynolds

Broadway Democrats (District Leaders)
Paula Diamond
Cutis Arluck

City Planning

Edwin Marshall (L. Friedman)
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

Consultants

Jonathan Martin (H. Schwartz), BFJ Planning, Associate Professor at Pratt

APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP WELCOME LETTER
Morningside Heights Community Coalition
Community Workshop
Corpus Christi Church
January 25, 2017

Welcome! Thank you for coming to the Morningside Heights Community Workshop. Members of the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC) organized this event and we look forward to working with you.

Community Workshop Purpose

The purpose of tonight's workshop is to hear from you. We want to document your ideas on the key issues facing our community, your concerns about challenges to our quality of life, growth you want to see, and development you want to stop. MHCC will document all your ideas, thoughts, and quotes and deliver a report to the Department of City Planning, the Office of the Mayor, our local political representatives, and the media, as part of our ongoing campaign to make Morningside Heights a better place to live. We are working to revise outdated community zoning regulations in order to halt overdevelopment, and ensure affordable housing in the future.

To start the dialogue, the MHCC Zoning Committee developed Guidelines and Principles addressing:

Community – such as affordable housing, proper schools, emergency services
Business and the Arts – such as neighborhood businesses, tourism, the arts
Adaptability – such as energy efficiency, open spaces, transit improvements
Building Heights and Views – such as contextual materials and density
Preservation – such as ensuring homes for low and moderate-income tenants, maintaining landmarks, re-using structures to serve the community,

You will see posters with this, and other information around the room. We need your ideas, support and criticism. Tell us what is most important to you about Morningside Heights, and what would you like to see happen. Or write it down on the form provided.

Stay Involved

Sign up to our mailing list by contacting: info@morningsideheights.org

APPENDIX F: MHCC VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET

**SIGN-UP TO TAKE ACTION ON
OVERDEVELOPMENT IN MORNINGSIDE
HEIGHTS**

**Please let us know what you would like to do now to prevent
overdevelopment in Morningside Heights by checking below.**

--- Action/Coordinating Committee

--- Health and Safety Committee (monitor new construction)

_ Rezoning Committee

**_ Outreach and Communications Committee (e.g. tabling, contact
neighbors)**

**Please give us your ideas and comments about what the MHCC
should be doing.**

Name (Print) _____

Street Address _____

Email (Print) _____ **Phone** _____

Please return to the MHCC representative. Thank you

Morningside Heights Community Coalition

www.morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.com

Facebook: [morningsideheightscommunitycoalition](https://www.facebook.com/morningsideheightscommunitycoalition)

MHCC – Community “Visioning” Workshop Report

March 1, 2017

APPENDIX G: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET

MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT SURVEY -- JANUARY 25, 2017

FILL IN ANY OR ALL OF THE SECTIONS BELOW WITH YOUR OPINIONS, THOUGHTS,
SUGGESTIONS. **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ABOUT....**

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU ? _____

HOUSING _____

BUILDING HEIGHTS/VIEWS _____

SCHOOLS _____

PRESERVATION/LANDMARKS _____

TRANSPORTATION _____

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT _____

COMMUNITY & CULTURAL RESOURCES _____

MUNICIPAL SERVICES: POLICE, FIRE, EMS _____

ENVIRONMENT _____

ADDITIONAL TOPICS _____

CONTACT INFO (OPTIONAL) NAME _____

TELEPHONE _____ EMAIL _____

APPENDIX H: “GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES

Community

GUIDELINE:

Maintain and promote a diverse, thriving and singular neighborhood character and a “Morningside” sense of place by ensuring that current residents, including seniors and low-income families, can remain in their homes, while attracting a diverse group of new, young families.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Ensure that seniors, the disabled and students have access to affordable housing.
2. Provide affordable two and three bedroom rental apartments for younger families.
3. Provide sufficient space, teachers, and staff for public schools, and expand school support programs, such as after-school activities.
4. Improve and maintain entryways to buildings, parks and subways to accommodate the disabled, the aged and children.
5. Increase police, fire, EMS and sanitation services for a growing population.
6. Expand public library services, especially for students, seniors and low-income families.
7. Provide senior and other community centers and services that will enable older people, especially those with low and moderate incomes, to remain in the neighborhood.

Business and the Arts

GUIDELINE:

Maintain and promote a commercially viable neighborhood by enabling a diverse merchant base to thrive and serve local residents, families and visitors.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Encourage a mix of current and new small businesses at rents they can afford.
2. Minimize storefront vacancies through strategies, such as temporary “pop-up” stores and cultural exhibits, that encourage pedestrian traffic and local commerce.
3. Limit the size of commercial spaces and frontages to discourage inappropriate chain or big-box stores that diminish the quality of life and displace smaller, local establishments.
4. Promote tourism and access to historic sites, such as Grant’s Tomb, Riverside Church, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and Columbia University, and ensure that they are accessible and not blocked by new buildings.
5. Increase investment in the arts – theater, music, dance, galleries -- to enhance the quality of community life and to attract visitors and commerce.
6. Increase the availability of convenient and essential neighborhood commercial services and amenities, such as laundromats, at reasonable rents.

Adaptability

GUIDELINE:

Adaptability initiatives should include preserving the unique character of Morningside Heights and ensuring that the fabric of the neighborhood will endure.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Promote energy efficiency by retro-fitting existing buildings and constructing new buildings with the latest energy technology to make Morningside a showcase "green" community.
2. Enhance access to the indoor and open spaces of local institutions, such as Columbia and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, by residents and visitors.
3. Improve transit – buses and subways – by expanding and making subway entrances and platforms more accessible and increasing the frequency of service. Make it easier and more convenient for the elderly and disabled to use the subways by keeping escalators in good order and installing elevators.

Building Heights and Views

GUIDELINE:

New buildings in Morningside Heights should reflect the neighborhood's scale and character.

PRINCIPLES:

1. The heights of new buildings should be consistent with nearby structures. For example, new buildings at or near the seminaries should not exceed the Manhattan School of Music and Teachers College residences, which are 18 floors.
2. The design and materials of new buildings should be consistent with and harmonize with their surrounding buildings.
3. Accommodate increased density by restricting new, high-rise buildings to designated avenue blocks, such as Broadway, while ensuring that mid-block, lower-rise buildings are preserved.
4. New buildings should not cast intrusive shadows over residential areas and

parks.

5. New construction should offer space at reasonable rents to existing businesses.

Preservation

GUIDELINE:

Maintain the historic character, views and sense of place of Morningside through building preservation, creative adaptive re-use of existing historic buildings and measures to ensure that vulnerable tenants are secure in their homes.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Ensure that low and moderate-income tenants can remain in their homes by enforcing rent regulations and protecting against harassment and displacement by landlords.
2. Appropriately re-use existing buildings, such as the landmarked reservoir Gate House, to better serve the community, such as for a senior or visitor center.
3. Maintain Morningside's landmarks and vistas to enhance the singular character of the neighborhood and to encourage tourism and local commerce
4. Maintain Morningside's attraction to film and television production companies who value its accessibility and character and contribute to the city's economy.
5. Keep existing residential structures in good condition.

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CityViews: 'As of Right' and Wrong as Developers Target Morningside Heights

AUTHOR

Robert F. Stern

DATE

February 8, 2017



Ryan Vaarsi

Morningside Heights

These days we're feeling vulnerable and neglected in Morningside Heights, the New York neighborhood bounded by 110th Street, 125th Street, Riverside Park and Morningside Park. That is because our venerable institutions, notably Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and Union Theological Seminary (UTS), in desperate need of cash, are selling their air rights to the highest bidders – namely developers seeing an unrestricted opportunity to build 30- and 40-story luxury towers in our rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. UTS is still negotiating. JTS is a done deal.

“We're not offering a building like for the billionaires on 57th Street,” a major developer explained at a meeting of the Morningside Heights Community Coalition at which he presented plans for his project. “We'll have apartments at \$2 million up to maybe \$5 million, depending on number of bedrooms. You can't find anything that reasonable anywhere on the Upper West Side.”

In other words, starter homes for millionaires.

When asked if he could make some apartments affordable for lower-income families, the developer replied: “Not possible, or let's say, not feasible. I paid a lot for the air rights, so that model just won't work.” At that point, his associate interrupted with the obvious: “You know, it's 'as of right.' ”

Yes. “As of right” means that developers can execute the unfettered purchase of what are known as air rights (allowing developers to build a larger building using the unused rights from an adjacent site) and greatly exceed the height limits set by zoning regulations dating to 1961 without seeking permission from the City Planning Commission, the City Council, or the local community. Unfortunately, Mayor de Blasio's “Mandatory Inclusionary Housing” law, which compels developers to provide affordable apartments when exceeding certain zoning restrictions, does not apply in an “as of right” zone where air rights are available for purchase.

The impact on Morningside Heights is especially frightening because the neighborhood, with its historic educational and religious institutions, is one of most beloved parts of New York City. Its European character evoked by Beaux-Arts style townhouses and prewar apartment buildings, many with Hudson views along Riverside Drive, have sheltered generations. Its cohesive grand scale along the avenues and drives, and its intimate scale along the cross streets gives it visual interest. Its local businesses have served practical needs and engendered endless memories.

Aside from casting shadows and blocking views and sunlight, when a luxury high-rise is built in a middle-class community, real estate taxes are eventually assessed at a higher rate for the entire area. In turn, local landlords charge higher rents and may try to pressure rent-regulated tenants to leave. Owners of buildings that contain commercial space raise rents on small business owners or refuse to renew their leases in the hope of attracting higher-paying chain stores or banks. A number of small Morningside Heights merchants are on month-to-month leases, and many storefronts are deliberately being kept empty. New residents filling large towers place additional stress on community services (police, fire), transportation (subway crowding and overflowing platforms), and already neglected schools. The character, fabric, and quality of middle-class neighborhood life deteriorates.

Several years ago, residents of the neighborhood just south of Morningside Heights were outraged when two soaring glass towers were erected on Broadway and 99th Street. Working with local officials, community activists managed to achieve the passage in 2012 of a special-purpose zoning designation to limit future construction heights, and regulate commercial development. The same year, the area north of Morningside, West Harlem, was officially rezoned to accommodate the negotiated expansion of the new Columbia campus while ensuring that low-rise, mid-block buildings were preserved in most areas and that affordable housing would be mandated for buildings exceeding zoned height limits.

In the 1970's and 1980s, middle-class Morningside Heights was viewed as a risky investment, known for rent-stabilized apartments and a high crime rate. Like much of the Upper West Side, Morningside Heights subsequently improved, thanks in part to a mix of co-op and condo conversions, while sustaining middle-class rental apartments.

But today, safe and economically stable Morningside Heights, with its historic architecture, small neighborhood stores, bucolic parks, world-renowned educational, theological, and medical institutions (Columbia, Barnard, Teachers College, Manhattan School of Music, Jewish and Union Theological Seminaries, St. John the Divine, Riverside Church, St. Luke's/Mt. Sinai), is open season for developers who recognize a highly desirable "as of right" zoning oasis.

Of the approximately 1,200 new apartments due to be made available in Morningside Heights in the next few years, only about 7% will fall into the so-called "affordable" range, based on the area median income (\$90,600 for a family of four in 2016), which inexplicably includes affluent areas outside the five boroughs, such as Westchester County.

The Morningside Heights Community Coalition has identified more than 20 local “soft sites” – vulnerable real estate parcels with at least one of the following distinctions: low-rise, tenant-free, nonresidential, vacant and/or with available “air rights” with lots large enough for development, which in turn enable developers to build large towers inconsistent with the surrounding area and to create luxury rentals and condos beyond what the community can afford. It is just a matter of time and opportunity as to when local landlords and institutions will sell, or develop themselves.

Happily for all, a remedy is available. Some portion of both the air rights price and the developer’s profit should be allocated to directly benefit the community – for example, to provide better subway access for the disabled, living-wage jobs, a new school, a senior center, and affordable housing grants. The process might take the form of a “Community Benefits Agreement,” for which there is local precedent in the case of Columbia’s expansion into West Harlem, and which has been executed in other New York neighborhoods and other cities. This would not in itself prevent the erection of luxury towers, but at least the community would realize certain benefits from their arrival.

And longer-range solutions are also required, because if steps are not taken to remedy this situation, Morningside Heights will suffer from the displacement of long-time residents and increased stress on local infrastructure and services, while major developers and real estate fund managers are rewarded and shareholders are kept satisfied. But Morningside Heights should have rights too. Updated zoning laws in line with those in its surrounding neighborhoods should be enacted, and commitments by developers and institutions to provide financial compensation and community improvements should be codified and enforced – “as of right.”

* * * *

Robert F. Stern is a board member of the Morningside Heights Community Coalition.

MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION PETITION TO NYC PLANNING COMMISSION FOR CONTEXTUAL ZONING OF MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS

Marissa Lago, Chair, Department of City Planning, City of New York
120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271

Dear Chair Lago:

WHEREAS: The onslaught of out of context luxury development is rapidly damaging the Morningside Heights community, and

WHEREAS: The neighborhoods immediately adjacent to Morningside Heights (north of 125th Street and south of 110th Streets) have already been contextually rezoned to limit this type of development, and

WHEREAS: Community Board 9M has passed two resolutions requesting the rezoning of Morningside Heights in order to preserve the existing neighborhood.

THEREFORE, we are hereby requesting that the NYC City Planning Commission immediately take steps to start the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure to provide contextual zoning for Morningside Heights.

PLEASE PRINT

NAME _____EMAIL _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

NAME _____EMAIL _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

NAME _____EMAIL _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

NAME _____EMAIL _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

NAME _____EMAIL _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

NAME _____EMAIL _____

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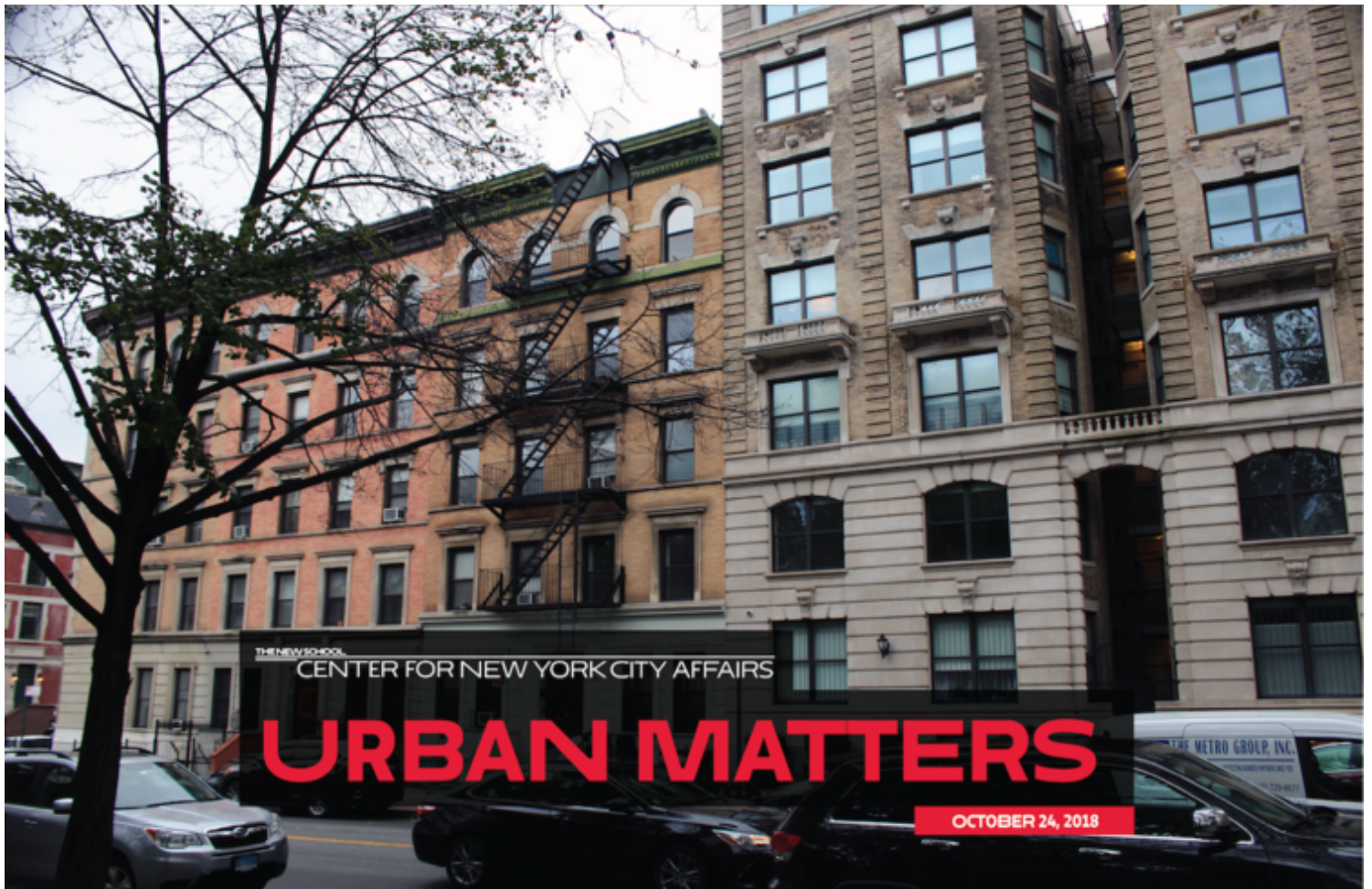
Morningside Heights Community Coalition



FEATURED CONTENT

‘Rezone Us Please,’ Activists Urge City Planners. (Yes. You Read That Right)

By David Robinson



This article appears in “Urban Matters,” a publication of the “Center for New York City Affairs” — The New School

The word “rezoning” inspires deep misgivings among many community groups across the city. They regard it as a Trojan Horse for new upscale housing development that will lead inevitably to gentrification and displacement of longtime neighborhood residents.

But that’s not the case in my Manhattan neighborhood of Morningside Heights; here, activists are pushing reluctant City Planning officials to rezone the area. It’s not that we’re blind to the shortcomings of the rezonings that have taken place in other parts of town; it’s that, on balance, the inclusion of affordable housing that would be mandated by rezoning represents the least bad alternative for a neighborhood facing a flood of upscale development.

Here’s the context. Bounded by 110th and 125th Streets and Morningside and Riverside Parks, Morningside Heights is dominated by major academic and religious institutions: Columbia University, Barnard College, Manhattan School of Music, Riverside Church, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Union Theological Seminary, and Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). Morningside Heights has a mixture of housing. We have about 7,100 rent-stabilized apartments, but with a high turnover rate of 17 percent they are at risk of becoming deregulated. We also have working and low-income tenants living in public housing, middle-class co-op owners, as well as many transient students.

About three years ago, residents learned that the **two seminaries planned** (<https://citylimits.org/2017/02/08/cityviews-as-of-right-and-wrong-as-developers-target-morningside-heights/>) to sell property and air rights they control on or near their campuses. Two towers, 40- and 32-stories high, will go up – and fill up with market-rate condos, with no affordable housing in either. The seminaries **justified the market-rate sales** (<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/15/nyregion/as-union-theological-seminary-plans-to-sell-air-rights-some-see-a-moral-quandary.html>) because of the need for renovation of existing facilities or for new construction. Unfortunately, this ignores the impact of these major new projects on a community already feeling beset by Columbia’s continuing expansion and worried about upscale development overstraining City services and driving out our small businesses.

In response, neighborhood activists formed the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC). Over two years of **community meetings and workshops** (<https://morningsideheightscommunitycoalition.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/morningside-speaks-mhcc-report-3-17.pdf>), it became clear that it was imperative to reform the existing zoning for the neighborhood, last changed in 1961.

With the existing zoning, most development is “as of right” and the community has no leverage to challenge the proposed height of buildings or require housing at less than market rate. Rezoning of the neighborhood, on the other hand, would allow for more contextual new development and compel the inclusion of affordable housing as part of the City’s **“mandatory inclusionary housing” program** (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/mih/mandatory-inclusionary-housing.page>). While it’s already too late to stop the 32-story tower now being constructed next to JTS, it isn’t too late to save at least 24 other “soft sites” in Morningside Heights. Rezoning could potentially do that.

MHCC remains aware of serious problems with rezoning under current rules. New construction would still be mostly market rate, with the consequence of threats of displacement. The definition of “affordable” is too high because it’s measured by the metropolitan “area median income,” which includes suburban counties and is much higher than that of New York City and our neighborhood. We followed closely the vehement opposition to recent rezoning in East Harlem and Inwood due to fears of displacement and overdevelopment; we noted that the City held public meetings, but didn’t listen well to the voices of the community. But, without rezoning, there are virtually no limits on private development and we saw no viable alternatives.

A zoning plan was developed in small meetings. We obtained the support of elected officials and presented the plan to at an overwhelmingly supportive community meeting (held before over 150 people on a miserable February night earlier this year).

We've also taken our case to City Planning officials, and met a reluctant response, ostensibly due to what they consider a relatively low number of potentially affordable units. However, this hesitance reflects a failure to recognize in the zoning context that existing affordable housing needs to be preserved, as well as the threats that arise when institutional properties once thought to be off-limits for development suddenly go on the market and become hot properties. So we remain hopeful that, with the support of our community, our elected officials, and our Community Board, the City will come around.

Rezoning isn't the only arrow in our quiver; MHCC is involved in other related activities, such as negotiating for community benefit agreements with private developers, and advocating for the health and safety of workers and community residents affected by construction. We also recognize that in the effort to preserve and create affordable housing, important policy changes are needed. They include strengthening rent regulation to remove some of the incentives for tenant harassment and displacement, and also public commitment to funding housing—public housing, Section 8 vouchers, and new construction for low-, moderate-, and middle-income people.

We're acutely aware that our overall obstacle is one faced by all communities threatened with out-of-control development: the power of the real estate lobby and the weakness of agency responses to neighborhood organizations who want a voice in the future of their communities.

But for now, for Morningside Heights, rezoning, while not perfect, represents a realistic path to creating affordable housing and an important tool for ensuring contextual development.

 **MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COALITION APRIL 2, 2019 APRIL 4, 2019# FEATURED**

One thought on “‘Rezone Us Please,’ Activists Urge City Planners. (Yes. You Read That Right)”

1.

ELIZABETH SORG says:

JANUARY 17, 2020 AT 3:49 PM

Bravo for fighting back! Here's a copy of my letter to friendly-with-teeth Corey Johnson:

Elizabeth Sorg
514 West 110 Street
New York, NY 10025

January 17, 2020

City Council Speaker Corey Johnson
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Dear Council Speaker Johnson,

I am so happy you are now part of the City Council, a real fighter for the good causes and such a great change in a city taken over by the rich!

As you know, uncontrolled luxury residential development in Morningside Heights is disrupting the character of the neighborhood. It is also placing excessive burdens on public services and foreclosing affordable housing.

At a Town Hall Meeting on September 19, you committed the resources of the City Council to working with the Morningside Heights Community Coalition. Rezoning the neighborhood, limiting the height and density of new, nothing but luxury residential development and creating much needed affordable housing are top priorities now.

As a resident of Morningside Heights, I experience the ghastly result of overcrowding on the No.1, 2 and 3 subway lines every day. I have even lost my perfect roommate who says she cannot continue to be late at work because it's impossible to enter the 2nd, 3rd or even sometimes 4th subway car stuffed to the gills! She moved to Brooklyn.

The nature of my neighborhood sidewalks and stores has also changed for the worse with so many people. The last thing we need is more! People used to be nice, they are now stressed and grouchy!

So naturally, I very much applaud your decision to take immediate steps to accelerate the rezoning process and prevent more unpleasantness.

In advance, I thank you for your help and consideration,

With my very best wishes to you for a Great New Year!

Elizabeth Sorg

I also am writing essentially the same letter- though not quite as friendly- to Mr Levine. I am mailing the two.

REPLY

[Blog at WordPress.com.](http://Blog.at WordPress.com)



Morningside Heights Neighborhood Empty Storefronts and Community Needs

A Survey Report Prepared by the Morningside Heights Community Coalition (MHCC)

December 2019

MHCCNYC.ORG

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	pp. 3-4
Survey Design.....	p. 5
Interpreting Results.....	pp. 5-7
Appendix: Complete Survey and Results.....	pp. 8-19

Morningside Heights Neighborhood Empty Storefronts and Community Needs Survey Report

Executive Summary:

Small businesses in New York City are shutting down at an alarming rate. Across the five boroughs, the citywide retail vacancy rate increased by 45% from 4.0% in 2007 to 5.8% in 2017.¹ Rates of vacancies are higher in the outer boroughs than in Manhattan; however, the *growth* in vacancy rates in Manhattan remains troubling and outpaces that in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. The empty storefronts left in the wake of closed businesses represent not only the deprivation of formerly available goods and services but also the loss of communities in which these "mom and pop" stores play an important part.

The social forces leading to the closure of stores and businesses are powerful and complex. Not only do small businesses today face intense competition from large chains and online retailers, commercial rents have skyrocketed across Manhattan's retail corridors by as much as 89%.²

The Morningside Heights Community Coalition has decided to respond pro-actively to the crisis of empty storefronts in our community. As an alliance of local residents, organizations, and other stakeholders committed to maintaining and improving our neighborhood in Upper West Manhattan, MHCC is well-positioned to highlight the needs of local residents and to engage key players in our neighborhood who can address the problem. By making the needs and preferences of our community known, we hope to contribute to the development and resilience of small businesses in Morningside Heights.

In July of 2019, an MHCC sub-group gathered input from the MHCC Action Committee and through dialogue and discussion developed the survey format, listing the most important categories to include. In September of 2019, MHCC conducted the MHCC Empty Storefronts and Community Needs Survey in order to determine what Morningside Heights residents viewed to be critical needs in the community. The survey was issued to more than 1200 MHCC members, with over 200 individuals completing the survey online, of which an estimated 85% reside within Morningside Heights's geographical boundaries. Respondents were asked to rank preferences for small business types that they would like to see within the community: stores, services, entertainment venues, and restaurants. Respondents were also provided the option to submit free-form responses.

According to the respondents, the most highly-desired stores in Morningside Heights include (in the following order): *women's clothing stores; thrift stores; home and garden stores; children's clothing stores; and dry cleaners*. The most highly-desired services include *urgent care centers; spaces for yoga, T'ai Chi, or bodily movement classes; after-school childcare centers; community meeting spaces; and senior centers*. The most highly-desired cuisines to be represented by neighborhood restaurants included

¹ "Retail Vacancy in New York City: Trends and Causes, 2007-2017," September 25, 2019. <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/retail-vacancy-in-new-york-city/>.

² Lynch, Dennis. "Pop-up Stores NYC: NYC Retail Market." The Real Deal, August 2017. https://therealdeal.com/issues_articles/are-pop-up-shops-becoming-a-permanent-fixture/.

Mediterranean and Greek; Middle Eastern; Indian; Japanese; and Mexican cuisines. Residents also indicated a strong interest in a local movie theater, as well as for vegetarian, vegan, pescatarian, Kosher, and Halal restaurants.

Free-form responses evinced some general themes among respondents concerning their general attitudes on the development trends in Morningside Heights. In particular, respondents noted:

- “You should not have to leave your neighborhood to buy someone a gift.”
- “...need a second hand clothing store we can communally support.”
- “Locally owned businesses. No more chains and franchises!”
- “Workshop place for learning new skills.”
- “Theater that shows docs and foreign films.”
- “Co-op that works with the farmer’s market in selling fresh food.”
- “Columbia focuses on needs of transient students, not long-term residents.”

Conclusion

The Morningside Heights Community Coalition is engaged in keeping our valued storefronts open and thriving. Empty storefronts deprive communities of services and amenities that contribute to the overall quality of life. These survey results are a step toward identifying and prioritizing community preferences so that we can more effectively advocate with our city agencies, elected officials, building owners, local landlords, and private institutions.

Acknowledgements

The project’s research, preparation, development, collection and analysis were led by MHCC members Jeremy Shapiro and Kevin Wei, who worked closely with the MHCC Executive Board to write and issue this report. MHCC members gathered at committee meetings to provide initial input and guidance, and the broader MHCC community (nearly 1300 members) responded at an extremely high rate, taking the time to complete and submit over 200 online surveys.

Survey Design

The MHCC Empty Storefronts Survey contained 5 questions asking respondents to identify which businesses that they would like to see represented in Morningside Heights, in addition to a free-response field for additional information and a yes/no question asking the respondent if they lived within Morningside Heights. Of the 5 questions asking respondents to identify business that they would like to see represented in Morningside Heights, 3 questions asked respondents to rank their preferences for types of business on a scale of 1-3 (1 being a slight preference to see the business represented, and 3 being a high preference for seeing the business represented). The remaining two of these five questions asked respondents to check off whether or not they would like to see certain types of restaurants represented in Morningside Heights without asking respondents to rank the restaurants.

Interpreting the Results

For the three questions asking respondents to rank types of stores they would like to see; we present full rankings of the options presented based on the following orders:

1. Total number of respondents who would like to see the option represented in Morningside Heights: this statistic can be interpreted as an overall indicator of whether or not respondents wished to see the business represented in Morningside Heights
2. Proportion of Respondents Responding 3 of all those who would like to see the business represented in Morningside Heights: this statistic can be interpreted as a sort of “excitement score.” It measures how enthusiastic those who want to see the business in Morningside Heights are about actually seeing that business in Morningside Heights.
3. Weighted Average Preference: can be viewed as an alternative to the first statistic. Unfortunately, the calculation of the statistic alone is meaningless, as only the order of the options given based off this statistic can be meaningfully interpreted. The weighted average ranked a response of 1 as a “score” of 1, a response of 2 as a “score” of 1.25, and a response of 3 as a “score” of 1.5. In other words, responses of 3 are weighted 50% more than responses of 1, and responses of 2 are weighted 25% more than responses of 1.

For the 2 questions that did not ask respondents to rank options, only a statistic 1 is presented.

Respondents were asked to rank types of businesses that they would like to see in Morningside Heights.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business	Ranking based on proportion of those respondents wanting the business who responded 3	Ranking based on weighted average of responses
Women's clothing store	Grocery store	Women's clothing store
Home and garden store	Shoe repair shop	Shoe repair shop
Shoe repair shop	Women's clothing store	Home and garden store
Thrift store	Pharmacy	Thrift store
Shoe and accessories store	Thrift store	Grocery store
Electronics store	Home and garden store	Shoe and accessories store
Men's clothing store	Dry cleaner	Electronics store
Sport and fitness store	Electronics store	Flower shop
Toys and hobbies store	Flower shop	Men's clothing store
Flower shop	Shoe and accessories store	Sport and fitness store

Respondents were asked to rank types of services that they would like to see in Morningside Heights.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business	Ranking based on proportion of those respondents wanting the business who responded 3	Ranking based on weighted average of responses
Space for yoga, t'ai chi, or bodily movement classes	Urgent care center	Space for yoga, t'ai chi, or bodily movement classes
Community meeting space	Gym	Community meeting space
Senior center	Community meeting space	Urgent care center
Urgent care center	Space for yoga, t'ai chi, or bodily movement classes	Gym
Geriatric medical center or specialist	Senior center	Senior center
Gym	Geriatric medical center or specialist	Geriatric medical center or specialist
Afterschool childcare center	Afterschool childcare center	Afterschool childcare center
Co-working space (such as WeWork or Spacious)	Co-working space (such as WeWork or Spacious)	Co-working space (such as WeWork or Spacious)
Veterans services center	Veterans services center	Veterans services center
Meditation chapel or space	Meditation chapel or space	Meditation chapel or space

Respondents were asked to rank types of entertainment venues that they would like to see in Morningside Heights.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business	Ranking based on proportion of those respondents wanting the business who responded 3	Ranking based on weighted average of responses
Movie theater	Movie theater	Movie theater
Theater (drama)	Music locale	Music locale
Music locale	Theater (drama)	Theater (drama)

Respondents were asked to rank types of cuisines that they would like to see in Morningside Heights.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business
Mediterranean and Greek
Middle Eastern
Indian
Japanese
Mexican / Tex-Mex
French
Thai
Vietnamese
Greek
Italian

Respondents were asked to rank types of dietary options that they would like to see in Morningside Heights.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business
Vegetarian
Vegan
Pescatarian
Kosher
Halal
Lactose Intolerant-friendly
Keto

Respondents were asked self-identify whether or not they resided within Morningside Heights geographical boundaries.

Option	Raw Number	% of Total
MHCC Empty Storefronts and Community Needs Survey Report		

Yes	173	83.17%
No	35	16.83%

APPENDIX

MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS EMPTY STOREFRONTS AND COMMUNITY NEEDS: COMPLETE SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Q1. Are there any stores that you would like to see present in Morningside Heights? On a scale from 1 to 3, with 1 being a slight preference, 2 being a medium preference, and 3 being a high preference, please list your preferences for only the establishments that you would like to see represented in Morningside Heights. Choose "n/a" for any establishments you don't think need additional representation in the neighborhood. You may add additional suggestions in the box provided.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business	Ranking based on proportion of those respondents wanting the business who responded 3	Ranking based on weighted average of responses
Women's clothing store	Grocery store	Women's clothing store
Home and garden store	Shoe repair shop	Shoe repair shop
Shoe repair shop	Women's clothing store	Home and garden store
Thrift store	Pharmacy	Thrift store
Shoe and accessories store	Thrift store	Grocery store
Electronics store	Home and garden store	Shoe and accessories store
Men's clothing store	Dry cleaner	Electronics store
Sport and fitness store	Electronics store	Flower shop
Toys and hobbies store	Flower shop	Men's clothing store
Flower shop	Shoe and accessories store	Sport and fitness store
Grocery store	Soft ice cream or frozen yogurt shop	Toys and hobbies store
Soft ice cream or frozen yogurt shop	Men's clothing store	Soft ice cream or frozen yogurt shop
Dry cleaner	Laundromat	Dry cleaner
Laundromat	Sport and fitness store	Laundromat
Children's clothing store	Children's clothing store	Children's clothing store
Jewelry store	Toys and hobbies store	Jewelry store
Cosmetics/beauty store	Jewelry store	Pharmacy
Pharmacy	Cosmetics/beauty store	Cosmetics/beauty store

Other Responses

NYC Dept. Sanitation receive acceptable recycle electronics, give the supermarkets relief by providing where empty spaces are to have machines receive the 5 cent deposit bottles provide visible maintenance surveillance cameras no vandalism.

I'm not much concerned with the type of store. Anything that serves the neighborhood is good. If I may add, it would be great if there were a movement to keep Broadway cleaner. The trash on the sidewalks and street is pretty bad.
Independent Coffee Shop
Arts and crafts supply store and bookstores
Record store, Kosher eatery
Healthy food restaurants
Fine dining restaurant, perhaps with Japanese or other Asian cuisine, Eastern European cuisine, or even American regional specialties
Pet shop, stationary shop
Coffee shops, bakeries, bagel shops, bookstores. Would be really great to have a food coop.
Pet store
FISH MARKET
Bakery
Good old fashioned health food store (Creative Healthfood) HIGHEST PREFERENCE Bagel Store Bookstores highest preference. Appliance repair store Little restaurants and small grocery stores
Sit down restaurant
A good bread bakery
No more badly designed storefronts with cheap merchandise like a \$0.99 store. We have enough in Upper Manhattan. The neighborhood needs of mix of needs and WANTS. Strolling. Browsing. Shopping. We want beautiful boutiques for men's women's and kid's clothing and jewelry, hats, shoes, etc., owned by artists and designers (from e.g., Pratt) who can't afford to rent in a Manhattan. More like very old Soho and Brooklyn 20 years ago. You should not have to leave your neighborhood to buy someone a gift. Or to have more to do in your neighborhood than go to the bank, buy groceries, bike in the park and get take out. Vino Fino and newer restaurants like Flat Top and the resigned Massawa look and are great. Now we need a touch more of interest on Amsterdam and Broadway between 120 and 125th to round out the neighborhood while maintaining Morningside's understated character. Just some tweaks.
return of Village Copies
Citibank has no branches in South Harlem below 125th street. Please, do open one below 116th street.
Cameras
Restaurants!!!
Card store
Health Store bring Bier Restaurant back
Used book store
Bakery
Top-notch pizza place--anything would be better than Famiglia!
BOOKSTORES!
Restaurants that are independently owned!
I think we need to do all we can to support Book Culture. Beyond that, there should be a kind of business that pulls people together. I think a second hand clothing store/thrift shop where we all communally support it by selling our clothes on consignment and donate some time in actually running the place.
Gluten free and organic sandwich shop or moderate price restaurant
Electronic components REI, a Bakery

High End Bakery
A fitness studio that offers classes would be my highest, highest preference! We would also appreciate a store that appeals to tween/teens.
Gift boutique. Something like Magpie in the UWS.
Health Food/Coop w bulk foods; baker, non-chain Chinese restaurant, stationary store
Bookstore
Bakery
Hearing aid center, travel agent
Cocktail bar. Bookstore. Gift shop.
NA here was because we have these already.
Specialized food market (cheese or fish or veggies, rather than full service which would threaten Apple Tree)
BAKERY
Pancake house, Breakfast cafes
I really miss Liberty House. It was one of my favorite stores for 30 years. Now our local shoe repair place is gone.
A large number of the stores listed above are already in neighborhood
Locally owned small businesses - no more chains & franchises! Middle Eastern, Japanese, Indian, Mexican restaurants, health food store, record store
If the hobbies included thread and yarn and such. Love TJMaxx or Marshall and a bakery
Many of these sound like chain stores that I don't want in Morningside Heights - Columbus and 100 is plenty close.
Movie theater (2), locksmith (1)
Bakery, fish store
Hair salon and barber shop, hardware store, bakery/cafe,
Anything that's not a national brand/chain, keep it local
Health food store
Stationery
No big chains
We need to immediately lend support to our existing neighborhood stores to sustain them. Government finds hundreds of million for developers but not a dime to local small businesses. I'm specifically concerned about our long-term "institution," Book Culture which is a book store and so much more in terms of their presence in our community.
BOOKSTORES !
Bookstore, candy store, gift shop, gym, hardware store, paint store
Bookstores, Restaurants
Antiques, art, photography, specialty foods, garden.
Affordable gym
Repair shop for computers, cell phones, tablets -- Apple and PC
Bodegas
Aldi's
Gift shop (like Card-o-Mat or Liberty House used to be on Broadway)- 3 high preference

Bakery
Corner market that sells flowers; ice cream shop (not soft serve or frozen yogurt)
Bagels
I don't favor any more chain stores at all. There is no place in the neighborhood to buy the simple things I used to shop for and the Asian grocery is the only one with decent prices. No one is selling clothing for any age group at any price any more, and that's a loss.
Locally owned businesses should receive priority
I checked thrift store - such as Good Will (like the one in Harlem around 123rd and 3rd or Salvation Army. Grocery store such as a Trader Joe's as Westside Market is expensive. Bakery - like Silver Moon on 105 th , Fish Market

Q2. Are there any services that you would like to see present in Morningside Heights? On a scale from 1 to 3, with 1 being a slight preference, 2 being a medium preference, and 3 being a high preference, please list your preferences for only the services that you would like to see represented in Morningside Heights. Choose "n/a" for any services you don't think need additional representation in the neighborhood. You may add additional suggestions in the box provided.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business	Ranking based on proportion of those respondents wanting the business who responded 3	Ranking based on weighted average of responses
Space for yoga, t'ai chi, or bodily movement classes	Urgent care center	Space for yoga, t'ai chi, or bodily movement classes
Community meeting space	Gym	Community meeting space
Senior center	Community meeting space	Urgent care center
Urgent care center	Space for yoga, t'ai chi, or bodily movement classes	Gym
Geriatric medical center or specialist	Senior center	Senior center
Gym	Geriatric medical center or specialist	Geriatric medical center or specialist
Afterschool childcare center	Afterschool childcare center	Afterschool childcare center
Co-working space (such as WeWork or Spacious)	Co-working space (such as WeWork or Spacious)	Co-working space (such as WeWork or Spacious)
Veterans services center	Veterans services center	Veterans services center
Meditation chapel or space	Meditation chapel or space	Meditation chapel or space

Other Responses

Computer repair
A community center and educational center for residents who want programs or workshops that offer activities and entertainment. Learning new skills or connecting with the arts is important. Residents want to socialize and feel a sense of community. A place where people can gather and interact with each other.
Affordable preschool and child care

Computer supply shop e.g. cartridges.
Life in motion/Body Strength HP
None of these are needs for the neighborhood. They are everywhere around here. Perhaps some people want boring because it makes them feel like their foothold in the neighborhood is stronger. I get that, but life is short! And adding more color to the beauty of our neighborhood will not mean its demise.
Another nail salon would be great. Also, a good bakery where you can buy cakes would be terrific.
I would love a gym more than anything else. The NYSC on 94th is so dismal.
Pool
Licensed physical therapy
Dance studio
MSG already provides the above services such as Gym.
Many of these are attractive but none that I would use personally
We don't want WeWork in Morningside Heights!
Bike shop.
Furniture store
The Morningside library has become a drop in center for all kinds of people needing social services, and you should talk to them about their needs, some of which don't belong in a library.
A number of the above services could be combined in one building as a community center that serves as a multi-functional space- for instance -body movement/yoga classes, meeting space, an area for seniors, cafe, a welcome desk with info on Morningside Heights etc..
Youth activities

Q3. Are there any entertainment venues that you would like to see present in Morningside Heights? On a scale from 1 to 3, with 1 being a slight preference, 2 being a medium preference, and 3 being a high preference, please list your preferences for only the venues that you would like to see represented in Morningside Heights. Choose "n/a" for any you don't think need additional representation in the neighborhood. And add any additional suggestions in the box provided.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business	Ranking based on proportion of those respondents wanting the business who responded 3	Ranking based on weighted average of responses
Movie theater	Movie theater	Movie theater
Theater (drama)	Music locale	Music locale
Music locale	Theater (drama)	Theater (drama)

Other Responses

Performing arts center that offer artistic events. Art galleries
The neighborhood is deprived of cultural venues other than Manhattan School of Music and Columbia's Miller...a movie house, a theater stage would be good additions
Reopen Metro movie theater! Keep Thalia! Keep Symphony Space! Independent businesses of any kind
Gaming space. Pop up and Museum Spaces with rotating shows/exhibits on street level. See e.g.,

http://www.colorfactory.co/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIpdmsrLS5AIVDLbIch1-BwEHex &Co. on Broadway and 111th Street could use a larger space. It is popular and fun and serves all ages. Ask the owner
Jazz music bar, wine bar with no or very soft music.
Movie theater without assigned seats
pottery center/gallery
These don't really fit the neighborhood
Definitely a good art film theater
Art gallery
Anything that's not a national brand/chain, keep it local
Movie theater that include recent Indy films would be great for this area
A theater that shows good movies, including docs and foreign films, would be most welcome and highly popular, I think. Manhattan School of Music offers marvelous theater and musical performances, as does the church off Broadway at 121.
I find that I always leave the neighborhood for music. Music venues that attract various age groups- an example is Barbes - which is in Park Slope. The music is very diverse and interesting.

Q4: Are there any cuisines or types of restaurants that you'd like to see represented in Morningside Heights? Select as many or as few as you like, or add your own responses in the text box below.

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business
Mediterranean and Greek
Middle Eastern
Indian
Japanese
Mexican / Tex-Mex
French
Thai
Vietnamese
Greek
Italian
Spanish
Chinese
Caribbean/West Indian
American
Southern / Soul Food
African
German
Russian

Other Responses

Really need a decent Chinese restaurant in the neighborhood. Also, a nice upscale restaurant to go for special events would be nice.
Diner
Kosher
Most of these cuisines are already in the area. I'm checking boxes to reaffirm my interest in them.
Deli
All of the above.
All are wonderful, more cuisines to be considered!
As much variety as possible.
Farm to table: Community Food Co-Op, tapas place
Same theme. Find an upcoming chef from a former well known Michelin Star type restaurant that needs a restaurant space of her or his own. Allow the chef to have the opportunity to do their own thing and make money. But high quality of the food is key. And yes, it can be affordable for everyone for a nice meal now and then. Just because you're old doesn't mean you can't and other people don't want to go out with a friend once in a while and have oysters and a fantastic cocktail with yellow pepper puree. See e.g. RED PAPERCLIP story https://www.google.com/amp/s/robbreport.com/food-drink/dining/red-paper-clip-restaurant-opening-nyc-2859739/amp See also ROKC http://nymag.com/listings/bar/rokc/
Turkish
Vegetarian
Health food
Not chains!!!
I
It seems that we already have almost all of these cuisines. If we start to duplicate, won't we run the risk of having some of the establishments we already have go out of business?
Glute- free, Organic
Filipino food, Dim Sum - anything!
GOOD Restaurants with better food than what are currently available
Dunkin Donuts, Bakeries More vegetable/fruit selections.
Korean
Cuban-Chinese
Mostly I'd like more table-service restaurants, fewer cafeteria-style
Farm to table, healthy
One extra relatively inexpensive breakfast place under the "American" heading above would be nice. Tom's is currently the only one in the neighborhood now. It would have to serve oatmeal!
Persian
A cafe/coffee shop that you can actually sit down in and enjoy a cup of coffee and maybe a pastry.
Would prefer not to see more Burger, Asian, and Mexican fast food restaurants.
A steak house would be great.
A good quality Diner to replace Manchester

Jewish deli that carries good bagels, whitefish salad, corned beef, etc.
Peruvian
Coffeeshop/diner, seafood restaurant
Vegan
Most of the restaurants opening in the neighborhood cater to the same market. I'd like to see more diverse choices.
All are good as long as it's not a national brand/chain, keep it local.
The more the merrier!
I think we already have a broad representation of restaurants in our community.
Kitchenette!
Dedicated gluten free
Better coffee shops... There are too many Starbucks.... Something like Seven Grams Italian coffee and bakery small shops would be excellent
The McDonalds at 125th and Broadway is an important center for the community. Columbia has already begun work on demolishing it but if there is any way we can keep that place intact, it would be hugely meaningful for the cab drivers who rest and take bathroom breaks there, for the families that visit for affordable meals, and for the communities who have spent time there in the past 30 years. https://gothamist.com/food/mcdonalds-harlem-closing
Seafood
Deli like Artie's or 2nd Ave Deli
Definitely need more Chinese restaurant options!
Another diner (Tom's with better food.)
Turkish
Latin American (Venezuelan, Colombian), Tibetan, really good Pizza - like Mama's Too! (105th), Paulie Gees (Brooklyn), Sotto Casa (Harlem)
Pancake House (NOT IHOP)

Q5. Are there any dietary options that you'd like to see represented in Morningside Heights? Select as many or as few as you like, or enter your own response in the text box below

Ranking based on total number of respondents wanting the business
Vegetarian
Vegan
Pescatarian
Kosher
Halal
Lactose Intolerant-friendly
Keto

Other responses

I'd like to see some of the dietary options mentioned above in restaurants that offered a broader menu rather than restaurants catering to the dietary needs exclusively.

Don't know distinction between Vegan and Vegetarian
All wonderful
Heart healthy
Diet conscious
Something NOT directed specially at college market;
But maybe Vegan. Most modern places have dietary options.
SUGAR-FREE ICE CREAM / YOGURT
I guess any of these might be good although they are not anything that I would especially seek out.
Gluten free
Allergies friendly
Oatmeal for breakfast! (Not just eggs.)
I'm pretty flexible - what matters is that the food taste great.
REALLY GOOD FOOD MODERATELY PRICED
They're all good but keep it real, no hypes
Dedicated gluten free

Q6. Are there other stores, services, or establishments that you have seen in other neighborhoods that you would like to see in Morningside Heights?

Street cleaning by the stores themselves and by the city. Adequate waste baskets on the corners would also help.
Art supply stores
Thrift stores
Keyfood, Fine fair supermarkets Marshalls, Bed bath and beyond, DSW.
Record (music) store
Clever yet reasonably priced gift shop
Art galleries Wine bars More neighborhood coffee shops
Health food store
Prepared foods
Any store to give Westside Market competition. They are way too powerful here and take advantage of it!
NO
More cultural centers and community meeting spaces
Store selling household linens and tableware
More mani/pedi shops
These are great--I'm sure there are more possibilities.
We are losing diners. Would love to see some come back.
CD/LP/audio equipment sales and exchange
A Trader Joe's or Whole Food type of store. All we've got is Westside Market and they desperately need some competition! A Pro-Image store would be welcome.

Whole Foods or Trader Joes Pro-Image (digital photo transfer etc.) a butcher
Community Coffee Shops
Witchcraft, Gray's Papaya, Motorino Pizza wine bar, Nanoosh
underwear, socks, panties, pajamas
Good restaurants. Stores that sell good spices. More farmers markets. I forgot: keep the stationery stores! Ivy League, Janoff's . Keep UPS
16 Handles
Bike shop
The BID on Amsterdam and 109 is a place you can always drop in to discuss positive ideas and connections and initiatives, both your own ideas and theirs and you can also find out a lot about what other good groups and businesses are doing. The Laundromat Project has a working laundry in east Harlem where you can make art while you wait for your wash. Proteus Gowanus was a space in which many small projects could find a tiny home, for example a fix-it club one night a week.
See theme above. I always thought Morningside Heights would be perfect for a Chelsea Market style place. While the Social Work school was empty for years on the corner of 122, that could have been a nice mini space.
Pain Quotidien
A magazine store, a closer bakery
Maison Kayser
Aldi's
Stores that sell unusual special gifts like Liberty House
Book store, falafel (miss Amir's), diner
Record store Tea salon (not bubble tea)
Love what's been happening in the former Liberty House space at B'way and 112th. Would be nice to have a permanent "bazaar" there open every day.
Yes, high-quality sandwich shops, like Witchcraft, or farm-to-table fast-casual eateries. Great ice cream shop.
More family restaurants to try and keep family feeling in Morningside Height. I feel like I'm living on a school campus now I hate it!!
MORE BOOKSTORES
A counseling service? A cooperative that works with the farmer's market in selling fresh food? A recycling area? An after-school tutoring center where people in this area could volunteer? Services that might be connected in some way to book culture so that that store might remain with us.... A non-profit center where people could teach the skills they've developed in their lifetimes. There are, for example, many older people who know how to knit and sew and cook. Perhaps they could be encouraged to teach these skills to younger people (and even to some older people like me who would like to learn how to sew at this late stage!) in exchange for something else they might need or want (like some help with grocery shopping, or even some light house cleaning). How about an oral history center? Are there any Columbia faculty or students or community people who would want to train others to interview seniors? (or interview them as well?) Perhaps a book could even come of it...I have an idea for collecting recipes from people in the community. All of these could be projects coming out of a community center. These activities could also, possibly, be connected with LILY (Lifeforce in Later Years), a local community organization that sponsors events and coordinates volunteer services for seniors. Also, how about a community garden? Is there any space big enough for that? A local theater group?
Yarn, sewing, fabric , needlework , what used to be called notions. Gift store with paper goods. Art

gallery.
Sporting Goods
Women's clothing
Trader Joe's, Sephora,
Gym, boutiques, local shops. Small businesses, not massive chains or cell phone stores or banks.
Neighborhood bar. Climbing space with ropes that is affordable. Community center
I live on West 105th Street.
Eco-friendly laundry services, eating places that have a range of prices (the ones nearby tend to be a little pricier especially for lunch and are often geared too much towards students), maybe a pet supply store
Yoga studio
We use to have a little of everything and all that's gone is missed: clothing stores, electronics, shoe repair, stationers, etc. Columbia Univ. focus on "needs" of transient student population does not promote community building nor the needs of long term residents.
Fruit and vegetable groceries
A 99c store that has a wide selection of cheap men's and women's underwear and socks and easy-to-use cellphone screens!
Housing for low-income individuals, shelter for the unhoused
KEEP BOOK CULTURE OPEN !!
Crafts Art
Day care
No
Basic clothing for men and women
Woman's clothing store. High end card and notions store.
A tech store ranging from mobile phones, tablets to PCs, including games. maybe a mini-Best Buy would work.
Perhaps a bookstore
Spacious coffee/tea room
Watch repair shop/jewelry repair shop. Tailor. I miss Liberty House!
No. This neighborhood --- and the ease with which we can get to the Eighties and Nineties --- is sufficient unto itself. Always has been. This kind of "survey" --- clearly in pursuit of more "development" --- is bogus and deeply offensive. We live in New York City, not Mobile, Alabama. We have public transport to the shopping paradise of the world. What Morningside Heights most desperately needs is a Morningside "Community" organization that actually stops the active destruction of this neighborhood. Instead, we get this stupidity, for which, yet another wolf in sheep's clothing has paid money. MSH "needs" LESS DEVELOPMENT, LESS CONSTRUCTION, LESS NOISE, and fewer "Community" types who pretend to care but hold hands with Columbia University and retail "developers." Get a grip, boys and girls.
I'd love to see a bakery with fresh baked bread
No.
A bar/restaurant. Ethnic restaurants
Home improvement; bagel and bakery shops
Again, let's look at our existing valuable small businesses, in particular Book Culture to assure they remain as a valuable member of our community. Remember that charity begins at home.

clothing stores, clothing boutiques, toy stores
Watch repair
Credit union, “natural foods” store (we have only a very small one), food cooperative.
iStore in Union Square is excellent example of type of electronics sales and repair store that would be good here
Butchers, fishmongers, cheese shops, ethnic markets. Also, not sure what you do about it, but there are plenty of restaurants, but a lot of them just aren’t very good. With the exception of Chinese and African food, most of the "ethnic" restaurants (Mexican, Japanese, Thai) are pretty mediocre.
Keep the McDonalds at 125th and Broadway open! More good bagel places closer to 125th
Artist ateliers
Harry's Shoes, Sephora, Mexicue, Home Goods
Pet store.
We don't have enough good tailors. And clearly there should be some place beyond our churches for the homeless and mentally ill. I would support a treatment center for substance abuse and mental illness.
Brewery, bars that attract various ages and serve unique beer (Dive Bar on Bdwy and 102nd), Brouwvri Lane (Greenpoint) Astoria Beer and Cheesemore Cafes like Hungarian Pastry Shop or Max Cafe
Crafts - where people can make a craft item or buy materials to make crafts.
Community Meeting Space

Q7. Do you live on 110th to 125th Streets between Riverside Drive and Morningside Drive? Your answer to this question will not affect other responses in this survey.

Option	Raw Number	% of Total
Yes	173	83.17%
No	35	16.83%



Connecting With The Morningside Heights Community During Challenging Times

Findings of the September 2020 Survey Conducted by the
Morningside Heights Community Coalition

Table of Contents

	Page Number
Background	3
Survey Objective	4
Method	5
Key Takeaways	6
Detailed Findings	7
Appendix - Verbatim responses	
Other Important Issues	14-21
Other Ways to Support Local Businesses	22-27

Background

- MHCC's June 2020 survey determined that area residents had concerns about the risk of Covid infection at the prospect of college/university students returning in Fall 2020.
- Supported by these survey findings, MHCC actively engaged with local institutes of higher education seeking to ensure that their plans for Fall 2020 would not increase the risk of infection among members of the Morningside Heights community.
- MHCC's efforts had a role in Columbia University reversing its plan to have undergraduates taking in-person classes. Other colleges in the area have followed plans set by Columbia.
- Columbia has allowed for 800+ students with special circumstances* to reside in student housing. These students, as well as faculty and staff, are required to adhere to safety protocols delineated in Columbia's Community Health Compact.
- A reduced student population in the area will impact the customer base for local business, adding to financial pressures already imposed as a result of the pandemic.

*As determined by Columbia

Survey Objective

- While MHCC is not able to hold face-to-face meetings to hear what our neighbors are thinking about, as a follow up to MHCC's June 2020 survey, we created the current survey in order to gain some insights into the views and priorities of Morningside Heights residents at a specific point in time.
- The findings of this survey have helped MHCC shape the topics discussed at the September 21, 2020 Town Hall.

Method

Two different software programs were used for survey collection:

- *SurveyMonkey* – an online tool used for survey design and data collection
- *Mailchimp* – a marketing tool used to send emails to a designated contact list
- An email with an invitation to participate in the survey was mailed to MHCC's contact list on September 3, 2020. A reminder to complete the survey was sent to this same list on September 8 and 14, 2020. Survey collection ended at the close of day September 14, 2020.
- A total of 259 respondents, ages 18 years and older answered the survey.

Note about the survey findings. The findings are limited to a self-select sample (not a random sample) and therefore not statistically projectible to any group or groups outside of this survey.

Key Takeaways

Morningside Heights residents want to **maintain the neighborhood** they know.

Their concerns reflect an interest in having appropriate **housing for residents** and **allowing local businesses to thrive**.

- **Rezoning** which would ensure the **parameters of development in Morningside Heights for residential and commercial** use, is considered **the most important issue**.
- Reflecting that **Morningside Heights is a caring community**, it is also important that **food support** is provided to those who need it.

Matters of **safety** are important to the community – both **preventing the spread of Covid** and **preventing crime** in the neighborhood

- A **majority (91%) agree that Columbia's reversal in plans** was necessary to **prevent the risk of Covid infection** increasing in the community.

Safety/crime prevention and **sanitation/clean streets** lead open-ended comments as **other important issues** for Morningside Heights. The need to address **homelessness** and the **state of neighborhood parks** is also on the mind of our community.

- These issues are not unique to Morningside Heights. They are city-wide issues due to **service cutbacks** resulting from the Covid-related **loss of revenue**.
- **Political leaders**, including those on a local level, are in the position to affect policies. They need to know these are **growing concerns among their constituencies**.

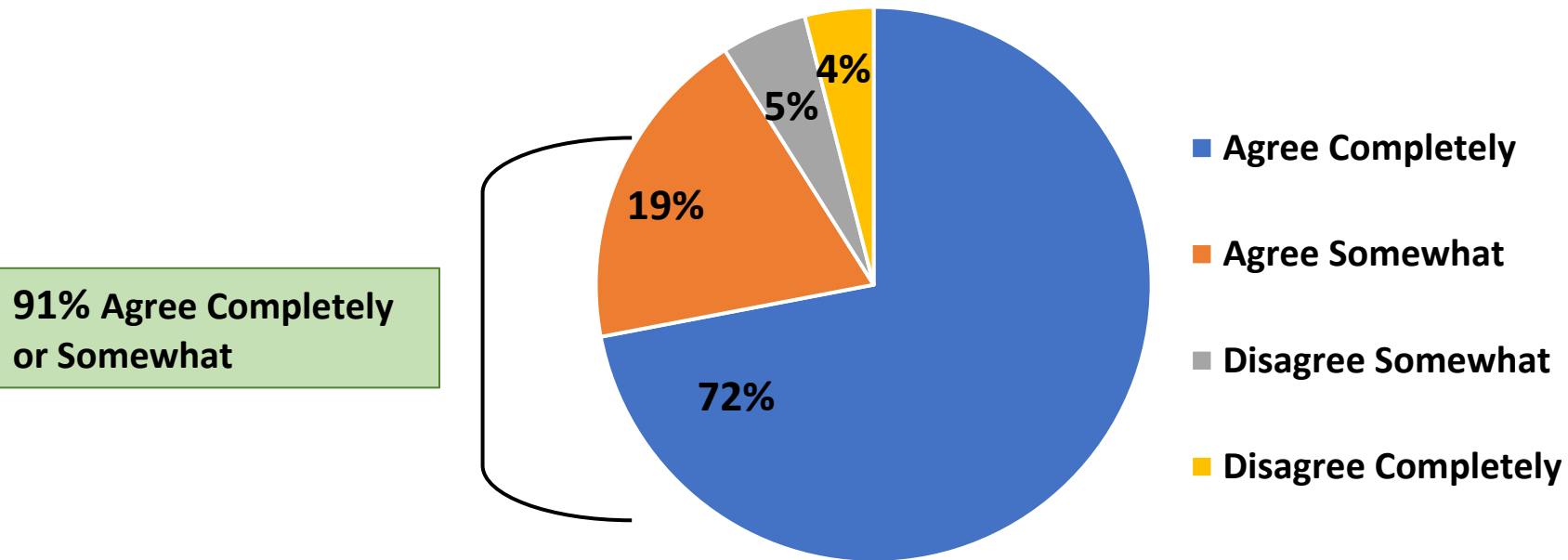
To **support local businesses**, residents are willing to do **more shopping** in the neighborhood, including to replace some current online purchasing.

- There is some interest in establishing a Morningside Heights **business association**. Community members are **less apt** to donate to a **fund to support local businesses**.
- Providing **rent relief** and using **advertising and promotions** are suggested most often for helping local businesses.

Detailed Findings

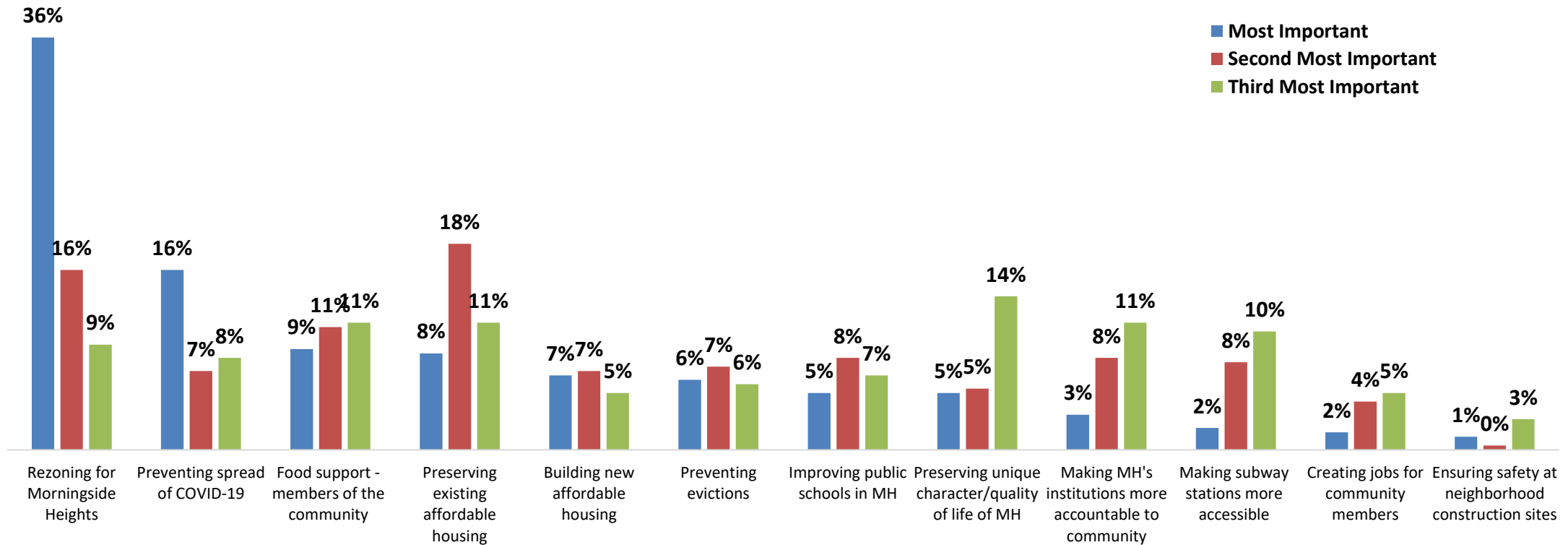
There is close to unanimous agreement that Columbia's reversal of its plan to have in-person undergraduate classes was necessary to prevent the risk of increasing Covid infection in the community.

Agreement with Columbia's Reversing Plan for In-Person Undergraduate Classes

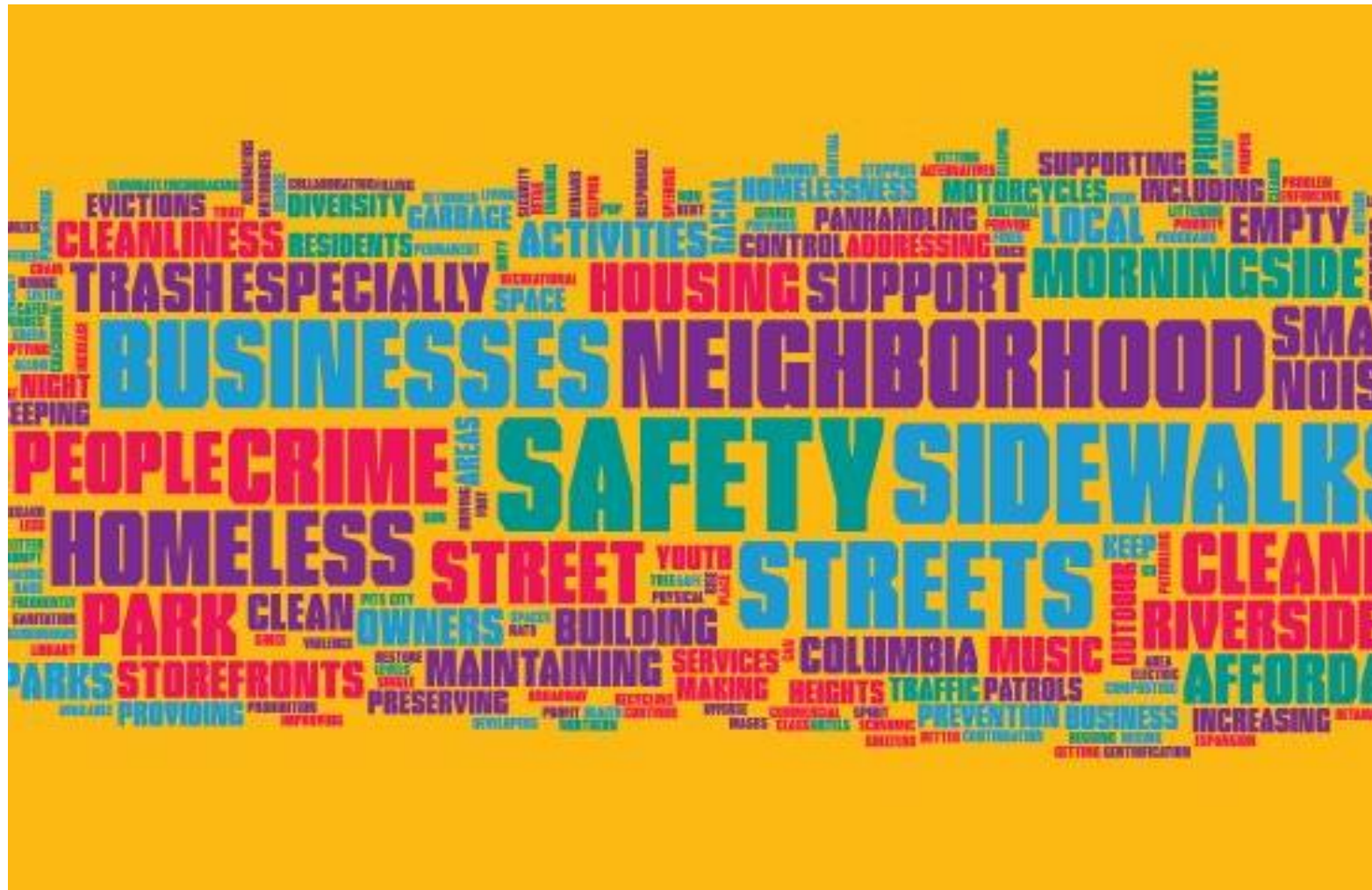


***Rezoning*, that will determine property use in Morningside Heights, leads other issues as the most important issue. It is followed by *preventing the spread of Covid* as an important issue. Having affordable housing in Morningside Heights, especially preserving existing affordable housing, is an important issue. Ensuring food security for neighborhood residents also resonates.**

Most, Second Most, Third Most Important Issues for Morningside Heights



Visual Depiction of “Other Important Morningside Issues”

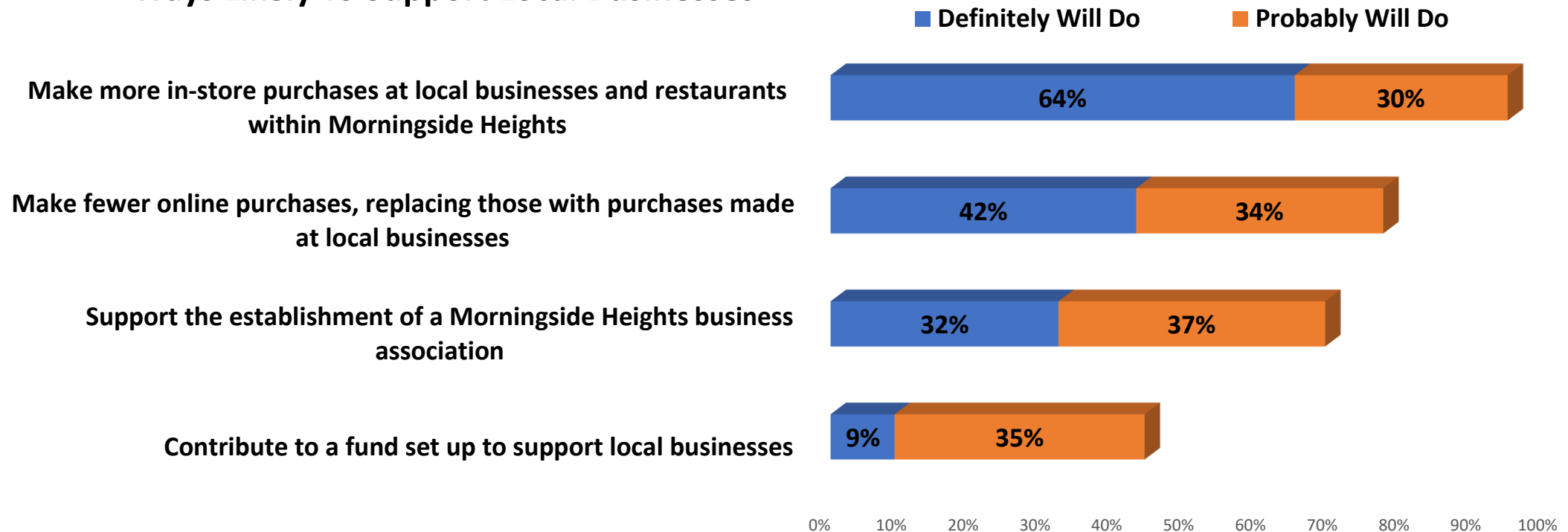


Verbatim responses focus on **maintaining the quality of life** in our neighborhood: **safety/concern about crime** (17%), **sanitation/clean streets**, (16%), **local businesses** (13%) as well **homelessness** (10%).

Percentages are based on the number of verbatim responses given (131). The more often a word or phrase is mentioned, the more prominent it appears in this “Word Cloud” All verbatim responses are included in the Appendix section.

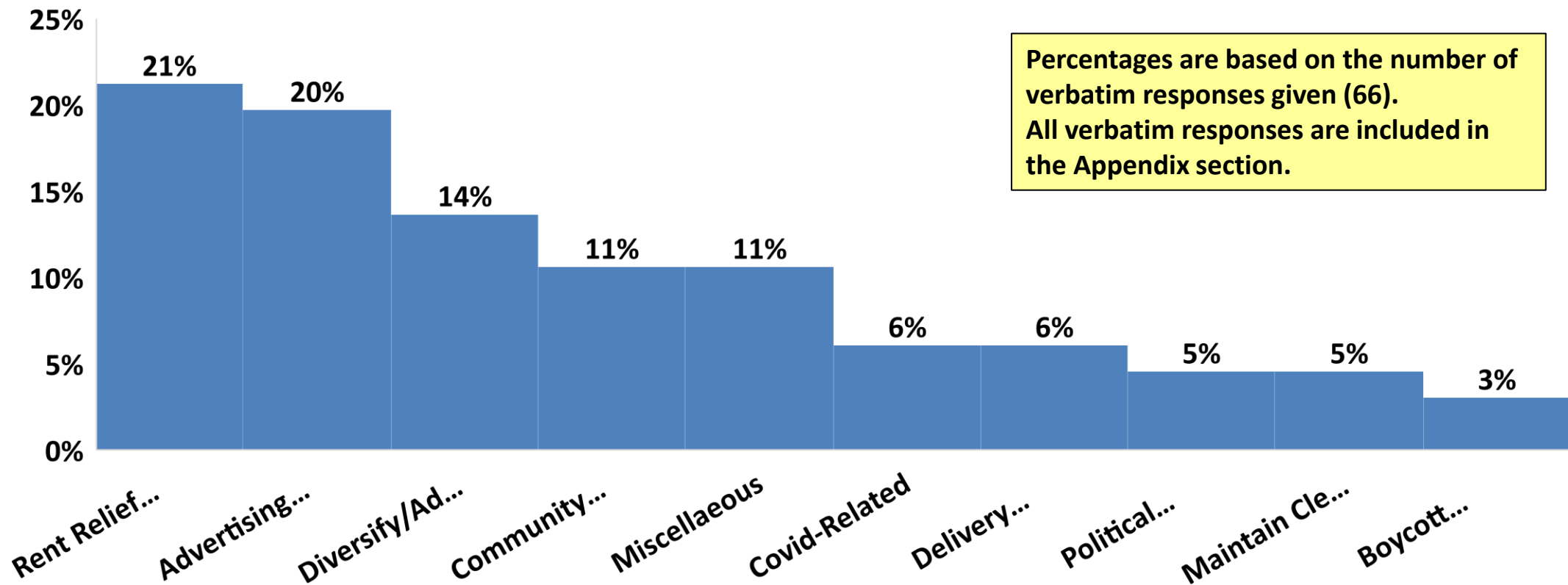
Morningside Heights residents are apt to increase purchases made in the neighborhood and replace some online purchases with spending at local businesses. Establishing a Morningside Heights business association is a more viable notion for supporting local businesses than making donations to a fund specifically set up to support local businesses.

Ways Likely To Support Local Businesses



Offering local businesses rent relief and advertising/marketing by local businesses are cited most often among those offering suggestions. Changes to what is offered by local businesses and community engagement are also mentioned.

Other Ways Suggested for Supporting Local Businesses – Verbatim Responses



Appendix

Other Issues Considered Important for Morningside Heights – Verbatim Responses (page 1 of 8)

Safety/Street Crime

- 1 Addressing the increase in street crime
- 2 crackdown on panhandling
- 3 Crime
- 4 I'm very concerned about the rise in crime, especially gun violence.
- 5 keep up roving safety patrols
- 6 More safe outdoor space for youth recreational programs
- 7 patrolling traffic in the neighborhood with regard to speeding and noise motorcycles
- 8 People driving motorbikes and electric scooters on sidewalks
- 9 Physical safety of residents in the neighborhood
- 10 Safety
- 11 safety
- 12 Safety
- 13 safety
- 14 Safety and Security
- 15 Safety from crime
- 16 Street crime: institute regular foot patrols
- 17 Traffic safety
- 18 Ensure that crime control and prevention have permanent priority
- 19 Public safety regardless of construction sites
- 20 Decreasing crime and improving safety. If it continues to deteriorate, I will be leaving the neighborhood after being a resident for over 10 years
- 21 Maintaining safety in the neighborhood
- 22 Scooters driving illegally

Other Issues Considered Important for Morningside Heights – Verbatim Responses (page 2 of 8)

Retail Spaces/Local Businesses

- 1 Alternatives for empty retail space
- 2 businesses that provide cultural activities which target residents, such as music various genres of music)venues, bars cafes. Would love to have a place to go to listen to music
- 3 Consider measure to limit empty storefronts prohibition on evictions, including businesses, until a new lease is in effect
- 4 keep small businesses afloat
- 5 Preserving small businesses
- 6 small business rent control
- 7 Support local businesses
- 8 Supporting local businesses (particularly small business owners)
- 9 Commercial storefronts returned to "mom and pop" owners. Corporate owned stores have zero investment in the feel, look, upkeep and spirit of the neighborhood
- 10 Supporting local businesses and filling vacant storefronts
- 11 Continuation expansion of outdoor dining areas post COVID
- 12 Support of neighborhood businesses that are not chain stores
- 13 Empty storefronts
- 14 Reducing the empty commercial space. Do landlords get some kind of tax credit for [unrented] empty space?
- 15 Reducing or regulating commercial space. Rental costs
- 16 Supporting local merchants
- 17 Increase the array of quality dining options

Other Issues Considered Important for Morningside Heights – Verbatim Responses (page 3 of 8)

Homeless

- 1 Addressing the increasing number of homeless people on our streets and in our parks
- 2 Are homeless in Morningside Heights hotels How can we better welcome the homeless
- 3 Homeless on the streets
- 4 Homelessness
- 5 Homelessness and getting them off the streets
- 6 Increasing available shelters; more people are sleeping on the street, panhandling, hungry.
- 7 Proper vetting of homeless who are to be offered homes in Morningside Heights
- 8 Providing services, including mental health, for the homeless
- 9 Reduce or eliminate people living on sidewalks and begging.
- 10 Providing shelter for the homeless who live on the streets
- 11 Helping homeless people find a place to live
- 12 Keeping trash from homeless encampments from becoming problematic
- 13 Providing resources for homeless people on the traffic islands along Broadway so they can be properly housed

Other Issues Considered Important for Morningside Heights – Verbatim Responses (page 4 of 8)

Parks

- 1 Continue providing masks in parks
- 2 Maintaining Riverside Park
- 3 Maintaining improving Morningside Park
- 4 Parks - renovating northern end of Riverside Park -- picnic table, outdoor cafe etc... expanded community activities theater, music in both Morningside and Riverside Park
- 5 Parks maintenance, overuse, cleanliness
- 6 The state of Morningside Park
- 7 Amplified music in the park
- 8 Barbecuing and noise in the park is excessive - a mountain of garbage is left behind
- 9 State of Morningside Park - overgrown, abandoned to nature, and the police intervention is haphazard/lazy

Other Issues Considered Important for Morningside Heights – Verbatim Responses ((page 5 of 8))

Neighborhood Diversity

- 1 Diversifying then economic base of the neighborhoods. Too many poor academics and students of poor taste to make for an interesting neighborhood
- 2 Enabling activities that promote mixing of the diverse population (at the library)
- 3 Encouraging mutual support for families and single people in the neighborhood.
- 4 Promote and welcome racial and class diversity
- 5 Retaining the neighborhood diversity
- 6 Stopping gentrification, especially by Columbia

Noise

- 1 Ambulance noise
- 2 Excessive noise, especially at night
- 3 Loud motorcycles at night
- 4 Making Columbia responsive to noise problems from fraternities and sororities
- 5 End noise pollution
- 6 Noise pollution

Other Issues Considered Important for Morningside Heights – Verbatim Responses (page 6 of 8)

Affordable Housing

- 1 Affordable housing
- 2 Building truly affordable housing; the term is a misnomer since rarely do rents have anything to do workers' actual incomes
- 3 Collaborating with non-profit housing developers to be sure we are a voice at the table
- 4 Preserving affordable housing
- 5 Push city and state to tax the wealthy more to support affordable housing
- 6 Upgrading NYCHA housing and grounds

Environmental

- 1 air pollution causes
- 2 Contributing to environmental sustainability in the neighborhood
- 3 Climate change: extreme heat for vulnerable residents and the catastrophic possibility of blackouts of the city's grid during a heat wave
- 4 Health/safety re: air quality (Asthma, Seniors/early childhood)

Other Issues Considered Important for Morningside Heights – Verbatim Responses (page 7 of 8)

Rats

- 1 Rat problem
- 2 Rats over taking Broadway medians and Riverside park

Racial Justice

- 1 Denounce racism practices
- 2 Advocacy for racial justice

Police

- 1 More respect from law enforcement
- 2 Ensuring fair policing and preventing police brutality

Other Issues Considered Important for Morningside Heights – Verbatim Responses (page 8 of 8)

Miscellaneous Comments

- 1 prevention evictions
- 2 Affordable childcare
- 3 building more protected bike lanes
- 4 Columbia affiliation leases
- 5 Support and mentorship for underprivileged youth
- 6 Food for all
- 7 identify homebound seniors at risk
- 8 Introducing vacancy tax in new constructions
- 9 Making subways accessible
- 10 Parking in areas not appropriate
- 11 Health services that are affordable
- 12 Finding a means to limit the height of the building under construction by Union Theological Seminary on Claremont Avenue
- 13 Organizing and mobilizing community members
- 14 Relationships with local institutions greatly inform & affect these items
- 15 End more construction
- 16 Student behavior in buildings where they are renting apartments
- 17 I am offended after the murder that occurred last year
- 18 Healthy food opportunities
- 19 Supporting community members mental health, including drug problems
- 20 Housing developers accountable to the Community re regular check-ins with MHCC
- 21 That this was not prominently listed

- 22 Make sure that everyday protesters along Broadway from 110th-111th Streets adhere to strict social distancing at those intersections and do not create crowded conditions for pedestrians around a busy shopping and dining area between 110th and 113th St.

Other Ways for Supporting Local Businesses -

Verbatim Responses (page 1 of 6)

Rent Related/Lower Rent

- 1 rent relief
- 2 Keep rents reasonable.
- 3 Columbia rent support
- 4 It's great that local e-kiosks feature neighborhood business
- 5 Prevent rent increases and turnover
- 6 Urge Columbia to lower commercial rents

- 7 Ask Columbia and other landlords to reduce rent for businesses and allow temporary use of empty storefronts.
- 8 Asking landlords to forgive rent during Covid
- 9 Demand commercial rent control
- 10 Properties that have remained empty should be donated for use--like the movie theatre at Broadway & 99th
Work on attracting "local" businesses--that serve the community or are owned by members of the community vs.
- 11 large chains; work w. condos or condos that control rental
- 12 Give landlords an incentive for renting empty stores
- 13 Rent forgiveness for small businesses
- 14 Lower their rents

Other Ways for Supporting Local Businesses -

Verbatim Responses (page 2 of 6)

Advertising/Marketing/Promotions

- 1 Ads in our newspaper
- 2 Have a Celebrate Small Business Day on a Saturday in October, forget the street fair and highlight local shops
- 3 Help local businesses with online advertising - if we can't shop in person, how would we know what goods and services are locally available?
- 4 Publish or promote an existing on-line directory
- 5 Compiling local business info for new residents
- 6 Directory of online small businesses that don't have a brick and mortar presence
- 7 Highlight a business each week in a newsletter
- 8 Perhaps recommend how we might best "boost" their profile? (e.g., Yelp reviews, next-door posts) or a "meet your local business owner/neighbor" feature? (perhaps interviews with HS student journalists)
- 9 Perhaps some kind of a "point system" that gives you credit a local purchase (e.g., a punch card)—then filled cards could go into a pool for a drawing with a nice local prize (dinner & drinks at a local restaurant, e.g.).
- 10 Encourage the purchase of Gift Certificates, or promoting a Go Fund Me campaign for particular stores
- 11 Perhaps providing deals through the MHCC and/or other local blogs
- 12 Promoting to entrepreneurs, limiting chains
- 13 Consulting - making the offer more attractive - preserving the streetscape by planting trees - discouraging vacant parcels by taxing owners until they are developed - for example Fairways parcel

Other Ways for Supporting Local Businesses -

Verbatim Responses (page 3 of 6)

Diversify/Add Types of Businesses

- 1 Insisting they keep their storefronts clean. Encouraging stores that meet PRACTICAL needs of residents (not another bubble tea shop).
- 2 Affordable food store - I shop a lot at Trader Joes and Whole Foods in the 90s. West Side Market is very expensive as is Morton's. Other ethic food stores (Hispanic). H Mart was a good addition to the neighborhood
- 3 We need more kinds of businesses! If I don't shop locally it is often because what I need is not available here.
- 4 Get more interesting and unique businesses
- 5 If they catered more to non-student needs: bakery, butcher/seafood, stuff that seems to exist in every other neighborhood but has long vanished from MSH
- 6 Fill empty stores with clothing, specialty foods, butcher
- 7 Increasing outdoor seating. Closing streets on weekends
- 8 Find ways to support local biz in developing online sales capacity, websites, etc. seems important in the COVID era where many want to minimize in-person shopping.
- 9 The cost to buy local products cannot be exorbitant given we are suffering economically.

Other Ways for Supporting Local Businesses -

Verbatim Responses (page 4 of 6)

Community Engagement

- 1 Hire local residents to work in our community businesses
- 2 Asking local organizations to buy locally as well.
- 3 Local business should be more friendly toward the community also.
- 4 Attend local events - fresh market a night out where local business to events
- 5 Asking local organizations to buy locally as well.
- 6 Columbia University should be contributing more to small business in the community

Covid-Related

- 1 End Covid 19
There needs to be accountability both ways, frequent testing of staff and sanitizing of locations, wearing of masks, prevention against harassment inside and outside of store fronts or on street dining. Greater concern for customer health and well being. assurance of quality products, food and services at reasonable prices
- 2 I don't think anything matters for local businesses except the implementation of a vaccine. It is unfortunate and unfair that many businesses will not survive long enough, but I don't see a way out of this dilemma.
- 3 The more local businesses that offer online ordering and delivery the better during COVID times
- 4

Other Ways for Supporting Local Businesses -

Verbatim Responses (page 5 of 6)

Delivery Service Options

- 1 Make it easier to identify delivery services. We are still not going into stores, under any circumstances.
- 2 Better delivery/ordering options
- 3 Build an online portal for shopping local with delivery
- 4 Morningside Heights Delivery Service partnerships....

Political Advocacy

- 1 Lobby for city support
- 2 Political advocacy or coalitions with other businesses
Evaluate the role of current regulations -- are they a burden that prevent new local businesses from starting up? or which zone certain locations in a way that restricts new businesses
- 3

Maintain Clean Streets

- 1 Have neighborhood cleanup volunteers I'm willing
- 2 support Doe Boys or similar projects to keep the sidewalks clean and attractive
There was no answer fit indicating don't shop online and am against it. I have been shopping at local businesses like West Side Market and Foodtown and Duane Reade this whole time. We can make these businesses more attractive to shop at by keeping our streets clean more garbage pails and frequent pickups). I
- 3 feel that insufficient attention is paid to this basic issue.

Boycott Amazon

- 1 Forbid Amazon and the big corporations to set up shop in the neighborhood
- 2 Boycott Amazon and that bum Bezos.

Other Ways for Supporting Local Businesses - Verbatim Responses (page 6 of 6)

Miscellaneous

- 1 Encourage the safe reopening of Columbia University and other neighborhood institutions in order to bring back the students who help our local businesses prosper.
- 2 Just continue to patronize them to the best of our ability.
- 3 Landlords who are good urban citizens in the first place let alone now.
- 4 live music
- 5 more open streets, car free zones, safer streets from traffic increase foot traffic and hence business
- 6 providing better access to capital
- 7 DEFEAT TRUMP

Morningside Heights Community Coalition moves forward in pushing local rezoning efforts

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EMMA SNODDY / COLUMBIA DAILY SPECTATOR

Local community members fear the Morningside Heights area will become increasingly flooded with upscale apartments and wealthier residents. To maintain the neighborhood's affordability, they have constructed a plan to rezone the area.

BY LUCY BRENNER ([HTTP://COLUMBIASPECTATOR.COM/CONTRIBUTORS/LUCY-BRENNER/](http://columbiaspectator.com/contributors/lucy-brenner/)) AND VICTORIA CHOE ([HTTP://COLUMBIASPECTATOR.COM/CONTRIBUTORS/VICTORIA-CHOE/](http://columbiaspectator.com/contributors/victoria-choe/)) | MARCH 19, 2021, 1:12 AM

Over the past decade, Morningside Heights and West Harlem community members have watched as high-rise towers and luxury developments have popped up throughout their neighborhoods. And amid rising rent prices and fears of

overdevelopment, residents have increasingly looked with concern toward vulnerable property sites in the area.

One key reason why luxury overdevelopment has plagued a community in need of more affordable housing

(<https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2021/02/26/morningside-heights-community-coalition-priorities-columbia-to-preserve-rent-regulated-units/>) is its outdated zoning laws. Zoning regulations control how land and properties may be used, and many community members consider current zoning laws to be outdated and too relaxed. The current zoning, which has not been changed since 1961, sets no limit to building heights and also permits “as of right” developments in the area. Under “as of right” zoning, developers can purchase air rights that exceed height limits for buildings without needing discretionary approval from the City Planning Commission.

But after 60 years without any changes to its zoning regulations, Morningside Heights could soon be rezoned through a plan coordinated by the Morningside Heights Community Coalition, a local alliance of residents, organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders. Although the MHCC’s zoning plan was initially rejected by the Department of City Planning in 2019, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio rescinded the Department of City Planning’s decision, permitting the zoning plans to continue. Local residents hope that these community-led rezoning efforts will address the need for affordable housing in the area and preserve the unique character of the neighborhood.

“Developers saw Morningside Heights as a very attractive, what I’m calling, ‘as of right oasis’ for out-of-scale development where they could combine air rights and lots to create very tall towers in areas where you would think that type of development would have been restricted,” Robert Stern, an MHCC board member, said.

In February 2018 at an MHCC Town Hall meeting, Barry Weinberg, chair of Community Board 9—an advisory board that represents Morningside Heights and West Harlem—presented a rezoning plan that was enthusiastically received by the community. The MHCC approached the Department of City Planning with this

proposal and held several meetings with department officials. However, in September 2019, to the dismay of many, the Department of City Planning rejected the proposed rezoning, citing a lack of resources.

Despite this setback, City Council Speaker Corey Johnson afterward announced to the MHCC that de Blasio had rescinded the Department of City Planning's decision and that the City Council could move forward in committing resources to the local rezoning efforts, even without the Department of City Planning's support. At an MHCC meeting, Johnson announced that he would commit the city land-use division group of urban planners to help develop a formal plan for the rezoning of Morningside Heights.

Sponsored by local City Councilman Mark Levine and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, the MHCC has moved ahead with rezoning efforts over the past year. Prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the MHCC and the City Council Land Use Group worked in tandem to develop a formal, comprehensive plan for rezoning. They integrated input from members of Manhattan Community Board 9, Levine, and Brewer.

Now, Stern and fellow MHCC executive committee member Dave Robinson report that a detailed draft of the plan is done. Prepared by the City Council Land Use Group, this draft includes urban planning maps and explanatory narratives for rezoning. Going forward, they must obtain an Environmental Assessment Statement for the plan before they can file an application at the Department of City Planning.

However, with the onset of the pandemic last year, some of the funding for the rezoning plans was redirected, which has made the completion of the EAS more difficult. To offset these budget restraints, the MHHC has worked with local institutions such as the Bond Center at The City College of New York.

A driving force behind these rezoning efforts is the community's need for affordable housing. Morningside Heights has long struggled with a lack of affordable housing, especially amid increasing luxury real estate development in the area that has raised local rent prices. Columbia's \$6.3 billion Manhattanville expansion—which increased threats of displacement for residents and placed up to 1,318 units at risk

(<https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2019/11/21/whdc-invests-2-million-for-over-150-affordable-housing-units-in-central-harlem/>) of upward rent pressure—has also exacerbated this housing problem.

To address these local housing issues, community members have promoted both the preservation of existing affordable housing and the creation of more affordable units in their plans for rezoning. The current proposal eliminates “as-of-right” zoning and increases density in selected areas in order to trigger the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing rule. By increasing density, land developers working in these areas would be required to include a certain percentage of affordable units in their new projects.

“If there isn’t rezoning, the only thing that will get built in Morningside Heights is luxury housing or institutional community facility space,” Weinberg said. “We want Morningside Heights to be a diverse and vibrant neighborhood, and that means not having luxury condo towers, like the Vandewater, and instead having affordable housing for people who aren’t necessarily affiliated with one of the major institutions in the neighborhood so that they can still live here and Morningside Heights doesn’t become a company town.”

Oftentimes it is the Department of City Planning that proposes rezoning to the City Planning Commission. However, what makes the MHHC rezoning proposal unique is that it is a community-led plan. Both Robinson and Stern believe that much of the importance of these local current rezoning proposals stems from how they are community-led, grassroots efforts.

Although Robinson noted that the process is more complicated when led by a community initiative instead of the City Department, he emphasized the significance of the plan’s innovation.

“The City Council would not be doing this if not for us. They didn’t come up with this idea out of the blue; it’s because of us that this is happening, so this is a very novel idea that we’re pushing,” Robinson said.

Because the rezoning plans are being spearheaded by community leaders rather than officials in City Planning, there are greater opportunities for dialogue with residents about how and where the rezoning is implemented.

“We’re on the ground in the neighborhood and know ... the neighborhood needs, saying, ‘Wait, listen, that really isn’t very good for that block of LaSalle or that block of Tiemann or my block,’” Robinson said.

Morningside Heights is within reach of historic monuments (<https://www.columbiaspectator.com/photo-essay/2021/02/15/a-walk-through-west-harlem-a-look-at-often-overlooked-historic-sites/>), beautiful parks, small retail shops, and restaurants. Leaders of the MHCC hope that the rezoning plans will help Morningside Heights not only preserve these features by ensuring that the neighborhood maintains its diversity, but also by creating more space for small businesses through commercial rezoning.

Stern noted that the rezoning plans are meant to have long-term impacts, including potentially preserving affordable housing units “for the next 50 years or so.”

“Ultimately, we want to preserve the unique character of Morningside Heights that we all love, and we want to really create a model also that other neighborhoods can see as possibly adapting to their neighborhood needs as a community-led plan,” Stern said.

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