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Mark Levine, Borough President

## **Recommendation on ULURP Application Nos. 240248ZSM, 240249ZSM, 240246ZSM and N240247ZRM**

### **515 Seventh Avenue Rezoning**

### **By 515 Seventh Avenue Realty, LP**

## **PROPOSED ACTION**

515 Seventh Avenue Realty, LP (the "Applicant") is seeking zoning text amendments and special permits to facilitate the redevelopment of 515 Seventh Avenue (Block 813, Lot 64) in Manhattan, Community District 5. The proposed actions include establishing a new Subdistrict A-3 within the Special Garment Center District which would modify special bulk regulations and establish special permits relating to floor area bonuses for pedestrian space and bulk regulations. The application also seeks to obtain special permits for floor area bonuses, an increase in maximum tower lot coverage and transient hotel use to accommodate a mixed-use commercial development.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Development Site is currently occupied by a four-story commercial building constructed in 1951, which houses retail uses on the ground floor including a deli, two restaurants and a medical supply store, and a public parking garage with 280 spaces on the upper floors. The Site has operated as a garage under a Board of Standards and Appeals variance for a parking garage use since 1949, which was most recently extended in 2019 through 2029.

Located in the Garment District, the Project Area has evolved significantly past its original manufacturing zoning. The Project Area was included within the Special Garment Center District in 1987. The Special Garment Center District was established to preserve apparel production. However, employment in this sector has declined substantially since then. The area now comprises a diverse mix of commercial office, retail, wholesale, hotel, and light industrial uses. Recent zoning updates in 2018 recognized this evolution by removing restrictions on manufacturing-to-office conversions and establishing a new special permit for transient hotels and changes to building envelope requirements bonuses for privately owned public space.

## **Proposed Development**

The Applicant proposes to construct a commercial building with 355,500 square feet of floor area at 18.0 FAR. The development would include a 5,402-square-foot covered pedestrian space accessible from both Seventh Avenue and West 38th Street, featuring public amenities such as planters, tables, and chairs as well as a public bathroom. The project has two potential configurations:

1. A 36-story (512'-3" tall) mixed-use building with 142,798 square feet of office space and 207,160 square feet of hotel space (255 rooms)
2. A 38-story (642'-1" tall) office-only building with approximately 349,958 square feet of office space

Both scenarios would include outdoor terraces totaling 7,350 square feet and two required loading berths accessed via West 38th Street.

**Nos. 240248ZSM, 240249ZSM, 240246ZSM and N240247ZRM.**

### **Area Context**

The surrounding area is characterized by high-density commercial development with buildings that significantly exceed the maximum 10.0 FAR limit, ranging from 140 feet to over 500 feet in height. Notable nearby structures include a 512-foot office building to the west and a 526-foot retail and office building to the north. The area benefits from exceptional transit accessibility, with proximity to Pennsylvania Station, Port Authority Bus Terminal, and multiple subway lines serving Herald Square and Times Square. The location's proximity to major attractions including Macy's, Madison Square Garden, and Bryant Park generates significant demand for hotel accommodations.

### **COMMUNITY BOARD RESOLUTION**

On May 8, 2025, Community Board 5 voted to approve the application with 36 votes in favor, none opposed, and three abstentions. Community Board 5 included three conditions in their recommendation. These conditions included making the building fully electrically powered, allowing the Covered Pedestrian Space to be open to the public from 5am to 10pm, and the Applicant providing maintenance, operations and security plans to the community board.

### **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

The Proposed Actions present an opportunity to maximize the development potential of an underutilized site in one of Manhattan's most transit-accessible locations. The project aligns with the evolving character of the Garment District while contributing valuable public amenities through the covered pedestrian space and public bathroom.

I encourage the Applicant to consider implementing the hours of operation for the open space recommended by Community Board 5. Additionally, this new construction should explore maximizing environmental sustainability by using only electric power. Finally, the Applicant should provide Community Board 5 with a maintenance plan to ensure that the public space is well maintained and remains a valuable public resource.

The development's scale and density are contextually appropriate, matching the FAR of existing buildings on the same block. The elimination of the parking garage's multiple curb cuts will improve pedestrian safety and streetscape quality along West 38th Street. The project transforms an underutilized site into a high-quality commercial development that enhances the area's economic vitality while providing meaningful public benefits.

### **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION**

I therefore recommend **approval** of Application Nos. 240248ZSM, 240249ZSM, 240246ZSM and N240247ZRM.



Mark Levine  
Manhattan Borough President