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Mark Levine, Borough President

November 17, 2025

Recommendation on ULURP Application No. 240305LDM, M880194CZCM, N240304ZCM, N240303ZRM - 1325 Ave of the Americas-Text Amendment/Cert By La Grande Boucherie LLC

PROPOSED ACTIONS

La Grande Boucherie LLC (the "Applicant") is proposing multiple land use actions to facilitate open air cafes within the through-block galleria (the "Galleria") at 1325 Avenue of the Americas (Block 1006, Lot 13), in Manhattan Community District 5 (the "Development Site").

The Applicant proposes the following actions:

1. An amendment to Section 81-231(b) (Existing plazas or other public amenities) of the Zoning Resolution of the City of New York ("ZR");
2. A third Modification to the original certification, dated October 5, 1987, approved under ULURP No. N 880194 ZCM; and
3. A certification from the Chairperson of the New York City Planning Commission ("CPC"), pursuant to ZR §§81-231(b) and 37-73 (the "Proposed Actions").

These actions would facilitate three open air cafes totaling 1,077.5 square feet with 57 tables and 114 chairs adjacent to the La Grande Boucherie and Kaiseki Room restaurants on the ground floor of the building.

BACKGROUND

The Development Site is located within both the C6-6 and C6-6.5 Commercial Districts and within the Theater Subdistrict of the Special Midtown District. The 35-story commercial building was completed in 1990 with approximately 640,983 square feet of floor area. The building utilized 40,688.94 square feet of bonus floor area generated by the 6,781.49-square-foot through-block galleria. The City Planning Commission (CPC) approved the original certification for the Galleria on October 5, 1987, under ULURP No. N 880194 ZCM, pursuant to ZR Section 81-748. Under the provisions of that section, eating or drinking service may not be provided within a through-block galleria.

The CPC has subsequently approved two modifications to the original certification in 1988 and 1990. Most recently, on December 1, 2020, the CPC approved a certification under Application No. N 210030 ZCM that eliminated 183.5 square feet of non-bonused galleria area adjacent to the La Grande Boucherie restaurant.

The text amendment would apply to three through-block gallerias constructed pursuant to the former ZR Section 81-748, including the Galleria at the Development Site, a galleria at 135 West 52nd Street approved in 1984, and a galleria at 1285 Avenue of the Americas approved in 1986. In 1996, the CPC eliminated public gallerias as bonused amenities and omitted ZR Section 81-748 from the zoning resolution.

Proposed Development

The Proposed Actions would allow the placement of open-air cafes within the Galleria while maintaining public access to the space. The text amendment would modify ZR Section 81-231(b) to permit open air cafes in through-block gallerias, with specific provisions that such cafes need not be open to the sky and that movable planters or barriers up to three feet in height may separate the cafe areas from the public galleria space.

The Chairperson certification would authorize three open air cafes totaling 1,077.5 square feet. The largest cafe, at 958 square feet with 52 tables and 104 chairs, would be adjacent to La Grande Boucherie on the north side of the Galleria. A smaller cafe of 119.5 square feet with five tables and ten chairs would be adjacent to Kaiseki Room on the south side.

The modification to the original 1987 certification would permit improvements to the Galleria including moveable planters, new benches, new trash receptacles, moveable seasonal heat lamps, enhanced lighting, new decorative pavement treatments, and decorative entry paneling at both the West 53rd and West 54th Street entrances.

Area Context

The Development Site is located in Manhattan Community District 5 in Midtown. The surrounding area is primarily zoned C5-2.5, C5-3, C5-P, C6-5.5, C6-6, and C6-6.5. The Site is within the Theater Subdistrict of the Special Midtown District, which was established in 1982 to guide development with unique floor area ratios, bonuses, and use regulations.

The area is dominated by tall commercial office towers, with many buildings rising over 400 feet and featuring retail establishments at street level. Notable landmarks nearby include the Mecca Temple on West 55th Street, Rockefeller Center, and the CBS Building on West 52nd Street. The neighborhood also contains numerous other Privately Owned Public Spaces.

The Site is well served by transit with the B, D, F, M, N, Q, R, and E subway lines in close proximity. MTA bus service includes the M5, M7, M20, and M104 lines.

COMMUNITY BOARD RESOLUTION

On October 9, 2025, Manhattan Community Board 5 ("CB 5") voted 32-5-2 to recommend denial of the project unless meaningful bathroom access is provided and clearly communicated to the public. The Board acknowledged that the revitalization of the through-block galleria would be a valuable amenity to residents, workers, and visitors. CB 5 noted that the modifications would make pedestrian travel through 6 ½ Avenue more pleasant by providing public seating and private dining amenities, and that the cafe complies with ZR Section 37-70 requirements.

However, the Board recommended denial based on the Applicant's refusal to provide signage stating, "Bathrooms Open to the Public - No Purchase Necessary." CB 5 emphasized its

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longstanding advocacy for increasing the number of clean, safe public restrooms in the district and ensuring that POPS are accessible to community members who work non-traditional hours.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Through-block gallerias were created as public amenities to generate bonus floor area for commercial development. While these spaces serve an important function as publicly accessible open areas in dense Midtown, some regulations have not kept pace with evolving uses and public preferences. The proposed text amendment provides a reasonable framework for activating these gallerias while maintaining their core function as publicly accessible spaces. Allowing outdoor cafe seating adjacent to ground floor restaurants can enhance the vitality of these spaces and make them more inviting to the public. I appreciate that the Applicant is proposing comprehensive improvements to the Galleria, including upgraded landscaping, seating, lighting, and decorative elements.

I share Community Board 5's concern about public restroom access in Midtown. While I am recommending approval of this application, I strongly encourage the Applicant to work with the restaurants to provide bathroom access to the public and to install clear signage indicating "Bathrooms Open to the Public - No Purchase Necessary." This would address the Community Board's legitimate concerns and demonstrate good faith in maintaining the public nature of this space. Public restroom access is a significant quality of life issue in our Borough, and commercial establishments that benefit from a publicly accessible open areas zoning bonus should contribute to meeting this need.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, I recommend **approval** of ULURP Application **No. 240305LDM, M880194CZCM, N240304ZCM, N240303ZRM**



Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President