



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

January 22, 2014

Vice Chair Kenneth J. Knuckles, Esq.
City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

**Re: ULURP Nos.: C 130336 ZMM, N 130337 ZRM, C 130339 ZSM, and N 130340 ZAM –
606 West 57th Street**

Dear Vice Chair Knuckles:

The proposed 606 West 57th Street development will transform underutilized land on the west side of Manhattan, creating construction jobs and over 1,000 units of housing. More importantly, it will create 237 units of permanently affordable housing and will have large retail spaces that will bring jobs to the community. Any project of this size, however, creates impacts on the community which must be thoroughly evaluated. The proposed project will go into a neighborhood that has seen a number of such large developments in the past few years and has many more in the pipeline. The impacts of each of these projects may not reach the level of significant adverse impacts, but the impact of all of the projects taken together is certainly significant.

First, the proposed zoning map amendment rezoning the project area to C4-7 will support the goals of the Special Clinton District of enabling a mixed-use, 24-hour community and is therefore appropriate. The text amendment to designate the area an Inclusionary Housing eligible area similarly furthers the goals of the special district to maintain a broad mix of incomes.

The proposed text amendment for special regulations within Northern Subarea C1, however, does not further the aims of the special district. The proposed zoning text would offer incentives, in the form of reduced obligations to provide affordable housing, for the addition of commercial floor area above the first floor. The proposed text has previously been used in rezonings where the City had a planning goal of preserving a broad mix of commercial and residential floor area. The applicant in this instance has not presented a case for why this is a valid goal in the Clinton neighborhood. Community Board 4 has a longstanding goal of providing additional affordable housing, a goal that I strongly support, and this community planning goal should be respected. The proposed text amendment should be changed to match the underlying regulations of the Special Clinton District. These regulations would set the total floor area ratio of the building at 10, which could be increased to 12 through the inclusion of affordable housing equal to 20 percent of the floor area of the building, excepting any ground floor retail.

Finally, the proposed project creates impacts on the surrounding community for which the applicant has not yet proposed any mitigation. The project will bring an additional 143 new elementary school students to schools that will already operate with a shortage of seats by the time the project is completed. Additionally, though the project does not on its own create a significant adverse impact on open space, this project in conjunction with all of the other projects in the area will contribute to a neighborhood that is starved of parks. The City Planning Commission should work with the applicant to explore ways that these and other impacts can be mitigated. Furthermore, the City Planning Commission and the Department of City Planning should explore new ways to think about cumulative adverse impacts in quickly changing neighborhoods like this one. These efforts should identify ways that multiple applicants can work together to relieve impacts that are created not by one project individually but by a number of projects together. My staff and I look forward to working with you to identify potential measures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President