

# NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

*A private university in the public service*

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John Sexton  
President

July 16, 2012

The Hon. Margaret Chin  
City Council Member – District 1  
250 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

Re: Issues Raised by the Public at the June 29, 2012 Hearing  
Before the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises

Dear Council Member Chin:

As you know, I provided testimony before the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises on June 29, 2012, and remained in the hearing room to listen firsthand to public comments and concerns raised at the hearing. I have also been briefed on the public comments provided after I left the hearing room. This letter is written to make you aware of steps NYU plans to take to address a number of these concerns, particularly those that are not directly germane to specific elements of the ULURP applications for the NYU Core project currently before the City Council.

Among the concerns raised at the public hearing were those pertaining to an existing shortage of open space in the area, excessive “nightlife” activity in close proximity to residential areas, and a perception that there will be an increasingly exclusive focus on NYU-related uses on the two superblocks. To address these concerns, the University plans to undertake a number of proactive measures, even prior to construction of the NYU Core Project on the superblocks. These plans are outlined below:

## Open Space

One of the key issues raised by the community over many years is the shortage of open space in the area. To address this concern, the University plans to:

- make the Sasaki Garden accessible to the public by posting way-finding signs to increase public awareness of the existence of the Garden and posting signage allowing the public to enjoy the Garden during day-time hours (subject to reasonable rules to prevent annoyance of others using the Garden)

or the residents of Washington Square Village) – these steps to make the Sasaki Garden available to the public will be implemented this year and remain in effect until the Sasaki Garden is closed in connection with the construction of the NYU Core Project on the north superblock after 2021;

- continue to allow members of the local community to apply for paid membership of the Coles Gym and the new gymnasium to be built in the basement of the Zipper Building;
- proceed expeditiously to build out the LaGuardia Temporary Play Area and Bleecker Street Seating on the south superblock, subject to obtaining all required government approvals, so that the public has early access to these new open space amenities;
- due to the community concern about the University's commitment to maintain open spaces, in addition to posting a letter of credit with the Parks Department relating to the maintenance of the new public open spaces to be constructed on City property adjacent to the NYU property on the superblocks, create an NYU-owned and NYU-managed endowment that will generate an annual maintenance fund of \$150,000 to ensure that NYU funding is available for the maintenance of the new public open spaces to be constructed on the superblocks; and
- be supportive of proposals made by the City or local community groups to improve the condition of the Mercer Playground adjoining the north superblock.

#### Excessive "Nightlife" in Residential Areas

Another issued raised by the community is the intrusion of clubs and other nightlife-related activities, with their attendant late night noise, in residential areas. In response, the University has decided that it will adopt a policy, subject to applicable law, that it will not lease to tenants on the superblocks to operate as a night club, or allow tenants to apply for or accept a cabaret license or apply for or accept a beer, wine or liquor license from the New York State Liquor Authority, apart from the use of space for a *bona fide* "restaurant," as such term is defined in section 3 of the State's Alcoholic Beverage Control Law.

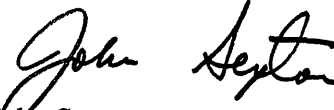
#### Non-NYU Uses on the Superblocks

Finally, an issue raised by the public is whether the superblocks will be so tightly woven into the NYU campus as to effectively exclude the public. We believe, consistent with the findings of the City Planning Commission, that the new parks on the western and eastern areas of the north superblock and the design of the new publicly accessible open space on the north and south superblocks will welcome the public to use these amenities. It should also be noted that the ground floor of Washington Square Village is currently used for several non-NYU-related uses, including a day care center

and an office of Manhattan Community Board 2. To address matters of public concern, the University plans to make available within the next year approximately 6,000 square feet of space in Washington Square Village Building 4 for a conforming community-oriented community facility use, subject to finding a local community-oriented non-profit organization to lease this space at a rent that will not exceed the rent specified in section 420-a[2] of the Real Property Tax Law. NYU will solicit public comment on its plans to market this space to ensure that information as to its availability is widely known in the community and to seek to recruit a tenant that will use the space in a manner that will benefit the public.

Founded in New York City in 1831, New York University prides itself on maintaining a tradition of being a "private university in the public service." Our setting in Greenwich Village has been a key element in making NYU a leader in higher education, and NYU is committed to working with the community to try to address its concerns about NYU's presence in the neighborhood.

Very truly yours,



John Sexton

cc: The Hon. Leroy Comrie  
Chair, Committee on Land Use

The Hon. Mark Weprin  
Chair, Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises