



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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Government and Community Engagement

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To: The Hon. Chairman Brad Hoylman
Community Board #2 Members

From: Alicia D. Hurley
Vice President, Government Affairs and Community Engagement
New York University

RE: Clarification of Potential Approvals for NYU Plans 2031

Thank you for providing a forum over the past year as we have been soliciting ideas and input on our master campus planning effort, "NYU Plans 2031."

As you know, last April after nine months of study and analysis, our outside design team presented the University with a set of recommendations and conceptual ways that the University might approach its growth over the next 25 years. With those initial recommendations in hand, the University embarked on a three-pronged effort: to process the comments and feedback from the Open Houses and meetings, to test and evaluate the recommended design ideas, and to conduct the rigorous technical studies needed to advance our planning. The latter includes studies of financial feasibility, constructability, phasing strategies, zoning and environmental analyses, traffic studies, and a range of other important issues.

These analyses are ongoing and will extend well into 2009 as we give shape to the University's master planning effort.

In the interim, however, I am attaching a document in response to your request that we provide an overview of the processes and approvals that may be required for NYU to move forward with its plans, particularly as they pertain to the "Superblocks" (the two Urban Renewal blocks bound by West 3rd St., LaGuardia Place, Houston St. and Mercer St.).

SUPERBLOCKS

URBAN RENEWAL

The Superblocks are the three blocks which comprise the Washington Square Southeast Urban Renewal Area (URA) and were established pursuant to the Washington Square Southeast Urban Renewal Plan (the Plan) in 1954.

- The Plan established an Educational Area - the northernmost block occupied by Bobst Library and other NYU buildings.
- The Plan established a Housing Area - the southern two blocks occupied by Washington Square Village and Silver Towers.
- All property within those blocks is now owned by NYU, with 505 LaGuardia - a Mitchell Lama co-op - having a 99-year-land lease which began in 1964.
- The Urban Renewal Plan was amended four times over the years and expired in 1994.

Here is a timeline of events involving development of the Superblocks.

Educational Area

- The City and NYU entered into a Land Disposition Agreement in November 1954 for the Educational Area.
- The deed is dated August 5, 1955.
- The deed between the City and NYU contained several deed restrictions tying the development of the Educational Area to the provisions of the Urban Renewal Plan.

Housing Area

- The City and an entity unrelated to NYU (Washington Square Village Corporation - WSVC) entered into a Land Disposition Agreement in November 1954 for the Housing Area. The deed is dated August 5, 1955.
- In 1963, the Corporation conveyed both the northerly and southerly parcels to NYU, with the exception of the Morton Williams site. (At that date only Washington Square Village and Morton Williams had been developed).
- In 2000, the University acquired title to the Morton Williams site.
- The deed between the City and WSVC contained several deed restrictions tying the development of the Housing Area to the provisions of the Urban Renewal Plan.

CURRENT ZONING

- Both Housing blocks are in an R7-2 Zone with a commercial overlay on the LaGuardia Place retail strip and Morton Williams site.
- The Washington Square Village block was built prior to the City's 1961 Zoning Resolution. There is a BSA special permit to allow transient parking in the parking garage.
- Silver Towers (aka University Village) and Coles were built per the 1961 Zoning Resolution *and* according to a Large Scale Residential Development plan.
- The Educational Area is subject to a BSA special permit issued in 1967 which allowed the development of Bobst Library. It was amended in 1989 to reflect the enlargement of Shimkin Hall to create the Stern School of Business.

2031 PLANNING CONCEPTS

- None of the concepts that have been shown for development would be 'as-of-right'.
- In order to develop on the Superblocks, the University will need to apply for zoning actions and other City approvals, including modification of the Urban Renewal Deed Restrictions.
- The zoning actions and related approvals would be subject to the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), a public review process that includes review by the Community Board, Borough President, City Planning Commission and the City Council.
- The ULURP approvals would supersede all of the past requirements set by the Urban Renewal Plan, the Land Disposition Agreements and the Deed Restrictions.
- With the recent landmarking of Silver Towers, if we pursue a building that touches upon any part of the landmarked site, NYU would have to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

DOT STRIPS

- The City had proposed in the 1950s to widen Mercer Street, LaGuardia Place, and the southern part of Bleecker Street in connection with a broader planning effort; those plans never came to fruition. The result was wider sidewalks on those portions of the Superblocks which are public spaces (not owned by the University).
- The Department of Transportation owns these spaces and works with the Parks Department to provide oversight of some of those strips.
- The University maintains the strip near the Coles Sports Center and helps with maintenance of some of the other strips.