



Greenwich
Village
Society for
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Preservation

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**TESTIMONY OF THE GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED SPECIAL WEST CHELSEA DISTRICT EXPANSION
Items 11 & 12, C 150101 ZMM and N 150102 ZRM
November 19, 2014**

Good morning Commissioners and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the proposed Special West Chelsea District Expansion. I represent the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, the largest membership organization in Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo. Since 2000, the Meatpacking District, including the block between 14th and 15th Street proposed to be added to the Special West Chelsea District, has been a special focus of GVSHP. After proposing the Meatpacking District for New York City historic district designation and listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, in 2003 much of the Meatpacking District was designated a New York City historic district, and in 2007 the entire Meatpacking District, including all of this block, was placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Unfortunately, the current M1-5 zoning for this block has no height limits or streetwall requirements, and thus not only allows but encourages completely out-of-scale and out-of-character development here. Such development not only shatters the scale of 15th Street, but can loom over the adjacent low-rise Gansevoort Market Historic District which abuts the proposed Special West Chelsea District Expansion.

We believe strongly that the proposed 50 to 95 ft. streetwalls and 135 ft. height caps are much more appropriate than what is currently allowed.

Putting these parameters in place was made especially necessary by the passage in 2013 of state legislation allowing the transfer of development rights from the Hudson River Park to this block. While the state legislation is only supposed to allow the transfer of such development rights one block inland, because at this point the Hudson River Park technically extends to Tenth Avenue due to the inclusion of the 14th Street Park, the legislation allows the transfer of development rights from the park to the entirety of this block. In such a case, the existing zoning would do little to limit the scale of new development. Imposing the height caps of the Special West Chelsea District in place for this block will ensure that grossly out-of-character development, which the current zoning would allow, especially with such air rights transfers, does not take place here.

I thus strongly urge the Commission to approve the proposed expansion. Thank you.