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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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January 23, 2015

Carl Weisbrod, Director
City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mr. Weisbrod:

At its Full Board meeting on January 22, 2015, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

University Place Corridor Contextual Rezoning Proposal: Andrew Berman, Executive Director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP), presented a proposal for a contextual rezoning of certain blocks and parts of blocks within an area bordered by Broadway, Fifth Avenue, 8th Street and 14th Street. The proposed rezoning would impose height limits on new development, prevent high-rise tower development, eliminate zoning incentives for dormitory and hotel development, and encourage or require creation of inclusionary housing.

Whereas

1. Andrew Berman made a presentation to CB2's Land Use Committee regarding GVSHP's suggested contextual rezoning of the University Place/Broadway Corridor; and
2. GVSHP proposes that the boundaries of the proposed area be: 8th Street to the south, 14th Street to the north, Broadway to the east and the east side of Fifth Avenue on the west; and
3. This area is not part of the Greenwich Village Historic District.
4. The current zoning regulating this area has no height or bulk limits, allowing and even encouraging the construction of tall towers particularly on larger sites; and
5. This area is characterized predominantly by structures that meet a similar street wall and rise between 2 to 12 stories; and
6. The preservation of the low- to mid-rise scale buildings in this area is essential to its character- both in height and bulk; and
7. Under the existing zoning, a 308 ft. tall tower is planned and approved for 110 University Place, which although totally out-of-scale and out-of-context for this area is completely as of right; and
8. Under the existing zoning, more such out-of-scale developments could take place throughout the area; and

9. The current zoning favors hotel or dormitory development over residential development, which is not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood; and
10. Contextual rezoning in other parts of the Village and East Village in recent years has replaced zoning districts such as these with ones that encourage appropriate development in terms of scale and use; and
11. The public hearing held by the Land Use Committee of Community Board #2 attracted approximately 125 people, and all but one of those attendees who spoke were in favor of a contextual rezoning.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

1. That CB2, Man. supports the proposal of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation for a contextual rezoning of this area, including a provision and incentive for inclusionary housing; and
2. That CB2, Man. finds height limits between 80 and 120 feet more appropriate to new development in the area; and
3. That CB2, Man. urgently requests that the Department of City Planning, in its capacity as the applicant, move expeditiously to pursue a contextual rezoning.

Vote: Unanimous, with 45 Board members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Tobi Bergman, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Anita Brandt, Chair
Land Use & Business Development Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

TB/fa

c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Sheldon Silver, Assembly Speaker
Hon. Deborah Glick, Assembly Member
Hon. Daniel Squadron, NY State Senator
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Margaret Chin, Council Member
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member
Edwin Marshall, Dept. of City Planning