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### NYU CORE

### TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

**BRAD HOYLMAN**  
**CHAIR**  
**COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2012**

Thank you to Chair Burden and the City Planning Commission for the opportunity to testify today on the NYU Campus Expansion Plan. I also want to thank your staff personally for following this issue as closely as they did and the guidance they provided the board.

The proposed actions before you today comprise the single largest ULURP application ever considered by Community Board 2 in Greenwich Village. As a result, CB 2 has spent a tremendous amount of time reviewing the proposal. From 2006 to 2010, the community board participated in more than fifty meetings of the NYU Task Force organized by the Manhattan Borough President. And since the public review process began, CB 2 has held 23 public hearings and heard from hundreds of members of the public. We think we've done our due diligence.

After this five-year process and scores of hours of testimony, I cannot name a single individual from the local community, who was unaffiliated with NYU or did not have a personal stake, who supports the proposal before you today. I point this out to the Commission because I think it's an extraordinary indication that the NYU plan has been a spectacular failure at the local level, convincing not a soul of its merits, notwithstanding years of well-intentioned outreach by the university and facilitation between NYU and the community by our local elected officials.

It should not be surprising, then, that the full community board opposed the NYU expansion plan unanimously in its resolution dated March 11, 2012. The fundamental reason for the board's rejection of the plan is the firm belief that the bulk and density permitted by the plan would forever alter the character of this special neighborhood. The plan would:

- More than double the zoning floor area and half the open space requirement on the superblocks;
- Completely change the residential character of the superblocks because nearly all of the new buildings would be for non-residential uses;
- Add thousands of new residents and bring an additional 10,000 – 12,000 people into the area daily;
- Create newly designed public spaces, including walkways and pedestrian paths, designed without public consultation and creating a closed-off university quadrangle;
- Result in new buildings with height and bulk that will tower over the neighborhood, casting shadows over gardens and open spaces far as Washington Square Park.

Moreover, we are concerned about the enormous amount of new construction that is planned, which would cause decades of disruption to local residents, many of whom are seniors. We also object to the transfer of ownership of two of the publicly owned strips of land to NYU. Instead, the community board thinks these open spaces should be mapped as parkland. And we oppose compromising any of the public strips by allowing NYU use them for staging for construction or permitting them to be designed to serve essentially as access plazas for the planned new buildings.

In addition, the community board thinks the commercial uses that would be permitted under the plan are inappropriate for the neighborhood, especially the proposed hotel in the Zipper building and the eating and drinking establishments that would be allowed. We do not think NYU should be granted a rezoning of the Commercial Overlay Area on loft blocks east of Washington Square Park, either, when the university's stated intention is to only increase retail use by 23,000 square feet in six buildings.

And finally, we are concerned about the impact of the project on Washington Square Village and 505 LaGuardia Place, which consists of the largest stock of affordable housing in Greenwich Village, and the effect on transportation, which we think were underestimated in the DEIS.

In closing, we're pleased to see that NYU made its first concessions on the plan in its negotiations with Borough President Stringer, including reducing the bulk by over 17%, eliminating a dormitory above the planned public school, prohibiting easements below two of the public strips, and eliminating a temporary gymnasium. However, as you will hear today from my colleagues on the community board and in the general community, these concessions are not enough to make the plan remotely palatable. Still, since NYU agreed to concessions with the Borough President that they formerly said were impossible, it gives me hope that much more can be accomplished to ensure that this plan doesn't destroy one of NYU's biggest selling points: the special character of Greenwich Village.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.