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## COMMUNITY BOARD No. 2, MANHATTAN

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May 24, 2011

Mr. Robert Dobruskin, AICP, Director  
Environmental Assessment and Review Division  
NYC Department of City Planning  
22 Reade Street, Room 4E  
New York, New York 10007-1216

RE: **NYU Core**  
**CEQR No. 11DCP121M**  
**Comments on Draft Scope of Work**

Dear Mr. Dobruskin:

Community Board No. 2, Manhattan (“CB2”), at its May 19, 2011 Full Board meeting, voted approval of the following testimony to be submitted to the New York City Department of City Planning at its May 24, 2011, Public Scoping Hearing for the above project.

New York University (“NYU”) has anticipated a significant expansion of its facilities and holdings in our community district for over six years. CB2 held numerous public meetings with the University to learn about their stated needs, and offered, along with members of the community, meaningful input as to concerns about the appropriateness of the proposed development and potential impacts.

In 2006, CB2 joined representatives from NYU, local elected officials, other community boards, and community groups in the Community Task Force on NYU Development (“Task Force”), convened by Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer. The Task Force developed a set of unanimously accepted Planning Principles (attached as Appendix A), which were based on a premise first articulated by NYU President John Sexton in 2004, that Greenwich Village is a “fragile ecosystem” and the University must not overwhelm the historic neighborhood that is their home campus. The Task Force met for over three years and made many specific recommendations about urban design, quality of life, sustainability, community planning process and accountability.

In July 2010, CB2 began its own review process of NYU Plan 2031. Since that time, we have hosted eight public hearings and forums, and two public working meetings, in addition to receiving testimony from many hundreds of people about the University's proposals. This document derives from a careful consideration of this extensive input.

We understand that NYU makes an important contribution to the economy and status of New York City, and that they want to grow in order to maintain their status as a premier institution of higher learning and internationally respected research. However, this is the largest development project to ever come before CB2, and the overwhelming reaction from our board and the community has been that NYU's proposal to add two and a half million square feet of new academic, dormitory, residential, retail and hotel uses in the heart of Greenwich Village, will forever change the character of this iconic neighborhood.

Our comments here are limited to the scope of study for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS"), to be prepared in advance of certification of a Uniform Land Use Review Process ("ULURP"). We begin with general comments and concerns about the actions being proposed, and then follow with specific requests for further study in each of the nineteen categories of potential impacts in the Project Area, as outlined in the NYC CEQR Technical Manual, and then end with a consideration of alternatives.

## **I. CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT**

New York University has been a part of Greenwich Village since their founding in 1831. The University moved to the Bronx in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but began a return to the neighborhood after World War II. In the 1960's they acquired the property between Mercer Street and La Guardia Place, West 3<sup>rd</sup> and Houston Streets, the "Proposed Development Area," with zoning and deed restrictions that defined these blocks as residential, and made subsequent agreements to become the stewards of the auxiliary open spaces.

In the 1970's, NYU decided to make the Washington Square area its main campus, and started an aggressive campaign to buy properties in the Washington Square Park "core." Over the years, this has led to increasingly strained community/university relations. Long time residents of what was once a vibrant, diversified neighborhood feel as if they live on a college campus. Further, NYU has enlarged and modified many of the existing buildings, designed new buildings that are not in keeping with the historic quality of the area, taken over and then neglected public space, and ignored the damaging impact of incessant construction on the quality of life for residents and businesses.

Currently the University owns or leases 10.8 million sf of space in the immediate Washington Square neighborhood. This proposal seeks to increase their dominance by another 25%. More alarming still is that all of the increase occurs in two residential superblocks, currently housing approximately 2000 families. Not only will these superblocks be asked to absorb two million sf in above-ground development, they will see the addition of an estimated 1400 dormitory students, 260 faculty families, 150 transient hotel rooms, up to 800 public school children, and the thousands of visitors associated with a conference center, an expanded gym facility and over a million square feet of new academic space. All of these new uses come at the cost of losing open space, light and air, historic view corridors and quality of life issues associated with increased noise, congestion and pollution.

The prospect of a delicately balanced, stable neighborhood that is largely residential, intimate in character, and historical in context, being overwhelmed by the proposed influx of exceptionally tall, bulky buildings, additional and augmented campus uses, and swelled populations makes it essential that we carefully evaluate all of the potential impacts of this project.

## **II. GENERAL COMMENTS**

In order to facilitate the increased bulk and density, and new uses that NYU is requesting in the Project Area (comprised of a Proposed Development Area and a Commercial Overlay Area), the city must approve a series of discretionary actions. It is important to evaluate these requests in the context of the University's stated goals.

NYU says that it has grown precipitously in the period from 1990 to 2005, and that their "facilities are severely overburdened." Their goal is to 'de-compress' the strain on services in the Washington Square campus by embarking on a program of "serious upgrade(s) and improvement(s) in facilities" in order to sustain the quality of its educational offerings. Three actions help to facilitate this goal.

### **1. Change in Zoning in Proposed Development Area**

The plan calls for a blanket re-zoning of the Proposed Development Area from R7-2 to C1-7. Our community is generally comprised of low-scale and low-density neighborhoods, and the existing R7-2 designation is one of the largest zoning envelopes in our district. The height and bulk allowed by a C1-7 (an R8 equivalent) zoning may be appropriate in midtown or downtown, but not in the historic core of Greenwich Village. Further, most of the uses being proposed in this area are allowable under the community facility bonus, and we have not heard an adequate explanation as to why their goals could not be accomplished with targeted commercial overlays. A hotel is a possible exception, but we are not convinced that a hotel is central component to the stated goal of 'decompressing' the core in order to maintain academic excellence.

### **2. Large Scale General Development Special Permit**

The plan also calls for dissolving the current Large Scale Residential Development (LSRD) on the southern superblock in the Proposed Development Area, and replacing it with a Large Scale General Development Special Permit (LSGD) that covers both the northern and southern superblock. We have not been able to determine from the Draft Scope the purpose of the LSGD, so it is difficult to comment. The plans are undefined and vague, and sorely lacking in specific detail, so how can we responsibly evaluate the impact of the entire project? We are especially concerned that the boundaries have not yet been determined, that the area covered is too large, and that the development would take place in two distinct phases over twenty years.

### **3. Deed Restrictions**

The two superblocks in the Proposed Development Area were created under the Title I, Urban Renewal program to provide quality housing for the neighborhood. The plan specified the amount of land that could be covered by buildings, with the understanding that the remaining open space would compensate for the height of the buildings. Because of significant amendments to the plans, the Deed Restrictions are now set to expire 10 years from now, in 2021. Accelerating massive development violates the expectations of the residents and businesses in the area, who have made lifestyle and financial choices based on the terms of these restrictions.

NYU also cites that "enhanc[ing] public recreational opportunities in the Proposed Development Area" is an another goal of the project. They claim that there will be a "net increase in the amount of publicly accessible open space." However this is accomplished only by acquiring open space that is currently publicly owned, and very much in the public realm, as well as utilizing space that is already available to the public.

#### 4. Demapping and Disposition of City Owned Land

For many years, CB2 has asked New York City to transfer the open space strips bordering La Guardia Place and Mercer Street from the Department of Transportation to the Parks Department. Recently we passed another resolution asking for this transfer, and received the support of all of our elected officials (see Appendices B and C.) NYU has defaulted through the years on agreements with the City and the community to create and maintain public open space. It makes no sense that one of the proposed amenities of the project is to take public parkland away from the public and instead offer access to space the community *already* has access to - but will now be surrounded by buildings, and to deprive an entire generation of access to parks and playgrounds. We question whether there is an Open Space Ratio requirement that is not met without this action.

NYU states that, in the Commercial Overlay Area, an additional goal is “to bring the existing retail uses into compliance and [to] allow for the development of . . . ground floor retail uses.”

#### 5. Change of zoning in Commercial Overlay Area, east of Washington Square Park

We do not accept this goal as a rationale for rezoning six square city blocks. The existing retail uses are grandfathered, and are more than adequate to serve the needs of the community. The area is surrounded by important commercial corridors, including Broadway, Lafayette, Eighth and Bleecker Streets. Currently, there is a great deal of empty retail space in and around the area. Therefore the impacts of this action must be carefully considered. The Draft Scope of Work says that the University has intentions to develop retail in only five locations. This change could easily be accomplished by applying for Special Permits, rather than go to the extreme of an area-wide rezoning.

Finally, while not an explicitly stated goal of the project, NYU has made the offer of 100,000 sf for a New York City Public School a very prominent part of the proposal. This will require specific city actions.

#### 6. Public Authorities Law Site Selection by the NYC School Construction Authority (SCA)

Our district, like so many in the city, is struggling with a shortage of public school seats at the kindergarten, elementary and middle school levels. This proposed facility could create 600-800 seats and therefore it is an element of the plan that is very interesting to us. However, the description of the process by which property would be made available to the SCA is disconcerting both because it is vague, and because it seems to be a great promise without a guarantee. First, it is unclear what kind of school our district needs to meet projected populations in 10 to 20 years, or even if such an assessment will be available to us during this ULURP process. Second, we have no assurances that SCA even wants this property, or if they have the resources in their capital plans to be able to develop it. And third, the Draft Scope states that if SCA is not ultimately willing or able to take over the site, then it will revert to NYU. This is of grave concern. If there are no specific guarantees at the time of ULURP, then all the possible alternatives for this site must be studied.

### III. STUDY METHODOLOGY

We have three major concerns about the general approach of the scope for the proposed study.

1. First, the Draft Scope outlines a baseline of the year 2021 in the “Future Without the Proposed Actions,” and refers to two as-of-right projects in the Commercial Overlay Area. We think it is more appropriate to analyze the plan in the entire Project Area as of 2031, when the University expects to complete all of their proposed development. This will allow a more accurate comparison of the two scenarios, and facilitate a better understanding of the impacts.

We are especially interested in an analysis of any potential community facility bonus or development rights currently available in the superblocks, any additional commercial square feet that could be built in the C1-5 overlays in the superblocks and any potential for further residential or community facility development. Such an analysis should include the reasons limiting such development.

As part of understanding all the implications of the “no-action” scenario, we insist on a more complete analysis of the “Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario” (RWCDS). Throughout the report, the University refers to its ‘intentions’ when defining the parameters of studying the RWCDS. This is unacceptable. NYU must always look at the maximum potential development and change allowed under the actions they are requesting.

For example, in the Commercial Overlay Area, the Draft Scope refers to NYU’s desire to maintain current (academic) second floor uses, and says that they intend to convert no more than 23,236 sf to ground floor retail. We should know the impacts of the maximum that would be allowed if the area was rezoned to C1-5.

2. Second, we would like to see the Final Scope take into account both regional and local impacts when defining the study areas for each CEQR category.

NYU describes the Washington Square Campus as the Hub of a Global Network University. “Each of the main global academic portals must have a home base at the Core that serves as a gateway for faculty, students and the wider public. Thus, even NYU’s plans that disperse its facilities at locations remote from the Washington Square campus burdens the Washington Square campus with additional space demands.” This describes a major expansion of a regional facility. Many of the categories for study should therefore consider the impacts in a wider context.

At the same time, the bulk and density of the proposal will have intense impacts on the immediate Project Area. As provided for in the CEQR Technical Manual, some categories should also identify subareas for study. The current residents of the two superblocks will be the people who are most affected by the increased height, bulk, density and change of use. A quarter mile or half mile study area radius could significantly dilute the potential impacts on open space, noise, air quality and traffic, to name a few categories.

3. The character of Greenwich Village includes many intangibles related to its history, the people that choose to live and work here, its iconic stores, and vibrant arts scene. We feel that this area is unique - in the city and country, and even worldwide. We call on NYU to conduct an extensive quantitative and qualitative analysis to truly understand what this neighborhood represents.

The Draft Scope states that the proposed methodology will simply “summarize the predominant factors that contribute to defining the character of the neighborhood, including land use, zoning and public policy; open space; historic and cultural resources; urban design and visual resources; transportation; and noise.” The spirit of Greenwich Village is more than the sum of these items. It is essential to capture what this neighborhood means to residents and the millions of people

who come every year to be a part of this experience. This study requires a strong sensitivity to the fact that the proposed project has the potential to overwhelm a neighborhood, in favor of a campus.

In addition to a detailed demographic profile of the immediate neighborhood, and the core of Greenwich Village, we would like the University to expand their methodology to include surveys, in-depth interviews and focus groups with non-NYU-affiliated residents on the superblocks and in the Commercial Overlay Area, and to ensure that the results are all based on accepted research protocols for qualitative analysis.

#### **IV. SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON TECHNICAL AREAS**

##### **1. LAND USE, ZONING AND PUBLIC POLICY**

*Community Board 2 notes that the Zoning Resolution's intent is to establish development and use parameters appropriate to the applicable neighborhood or blocks. CB2 is concerned that the proposed zoning actions in the project area will result in unacceptable height, bulk and density that will change a residential neighborhood into an area with more buildings and people than the neighborhood was intended to support.*

##### **Zoning :**

- The details of the Large-Scale General Development (LSGD) Special Permit are an essential part of this proposal. The **Draft Scope of Work** does not properly describe the LSGD. These details must be the basis of study for all impacts and environmental consequences. Please provide the precise boundaries of the LSGD and describe the waivers and/or Zoning Resolution text amendments (may include height and setback waivers and potentially floor area and open space redistribution across zoning lot boundary lines, and court and location of use regulations) that will be needed.
- NYU's proposal includes the re-cladding of the ground floor and second floor of the Washington Square Village apartment buildings to add transparency. This seems to indicate a change of use on these floors. Please describe in detail the purpose of recladding and study the potential impacts to current tenants, especially possible displacement.
- Please provide an analysis of the current zoning requirements for open space and the open space requirements for the proposed action. Please explain how the proposed demapping of public land impacts the open space requirements.
- The proposed Commercial C1-5 Overlay District does not include a complete build out for the full amount possible of retail space. Please provide an analysis of the Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario for the C1-5 overlay, east of Washington Square Park.
- Community Board 2 questions the appropriateness of a Commercial Overlay district that faces Washington Square Park. Please provide an analysis of a RWCD as to the impacts of potential retail on the eastern boundary of the Park.

**Public Policy:**

- The Urban Renewal Plan that created the original superblocks, and its subsequent amendments, established a Public Policy that shaped these blocks. This Policy was in effect for 50 years. The proposed action significantly changes the original plan. Please provide a comparative analysis of the requirements of the Urban Renewal Plan, including the Deed Restrictions, and the Proposed Action.
- The Mitchell-Lama Program that created 505 LaGuardia Place established a Public Policy for affordable housing. Please provide an analysis of the potential impacts, including the potential for indirect displacement, that the proposed action may have.
- Community Board 2 notes that the adjoining Historic Districts also constitute Public Policy. Our concerns are addressed in the section below, Historic and Cultural Resources.

**PENDING:**

**Future Projects**

The map of projects provided by NYU does not include all of the proposed projects in the Hudson Square Area. A list of these projects will soon be available as part of the Draft Scope of Work for the pending Hudson Square Rezoning, and should be included.

**Zoning Projects**

CB2 notes the proposed Hudson Square Rezoning and pending zoning actions at former St Vincent’s Hospital site.

**Policy Actions**

CB2 notes the proposed SOHO BID and the planned expansion of the NOHO BID.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

**The No Action Alternative**

- Based on documents from City Planning it appears that there may be additional unused development rights available in the Proposed Development Area. The “No Action Alternative” should be fully explored. Please provide a detailed description of the maximum “as-of-right” build-out (including development allowed by Special Permit) allowed under the current zoning, and the anticipated impacts.
- The “No Action Alternative” in the Commercial Overlay District should also include the maximum “as-of-right” build-out. NYU has noted the potential for additional construction in this area.

**Additional Alternatives:**

- As reasonable alternative for the proposed C1-7 District please provide a comparative analysis for a district that retains the current R7-2 zoning district and uses Commercial Overlay zoning, as needed.
- As reasonable alternative for the proposed demapping and City disposition of portions of city streets. please provide an analysis of the proposed project without the demapped areas.
- As reasonable alternative for the proposed actions please provide a plan to retain the current zoning, and instead relocate new development to other areas of the City that have expressed strong interest and invited development, for example Community Board 1, Manhattan. Land-use and existing zoning regulations in areas such as the nearby Financial District would accommodate present and future expansion to and beyond 2031, and should be investigated. (see Appendix D)
- Within Community Board 2, many hotels have been built in recent years, and have indicated that they are not nearly at capacity. As reasonable alternative for the proposed Hotel please provide a plan for using excess hotel space in CB2.
- As part of the Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario, please study the maximum allowable development in the event that the NYC SCA decides not to pursue a public school on the current Morton Williams supermarket site.

## 2. SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

*NYU's Plan 2031 proposes a large number of changes that will affect existing residents and businesses as well as change the existing socioeconomic conditions. CB2 requests more detail on all aspects of this topic, especially including indirect displacement of residences and businesses. In addition to the studies required by CEQR and included in NYU's Draft Scope, we ask that the following be studied.*

- Overall, CB2 asks that NYU provide a separate analysis of the existing demographic conditions in the Sub-Areas directly impacted by the proposed project, specifically Census Tracts 55.01 and 59, and how the proposed changes will affect these Sub-Areas\*.

### **Direct Residential Displacement**

- NYU's Draft Scope states that the proposed action will not directly displace any residents from the project site. However, page 23 of the Draft Scope states that 15 Washington Place will be converted from approximately 74,000-gsf residential into 129,000-sf academic use. Please provide a full explanation of what will happen to 14 and 15 Washington Place and any other locations that will no longer be residential under either without or with the proposed actions, the number of residents affected and what plans are being made to accommodate them.
- NYU's Draft Scope states under the proposed actions that the bottom two floors of Washington Square Village may become retail. Please provide details of what will happen to the current residents on these floors.

- Study potential for and ramifications of displacement of rent-stabilized residents by a not-for-profit University.

### **Indirect Residential Displacement**

- Analyze the effect of increased land rent on the income-limited Mitchell-Lama housing known as 505 LaGuardia Place. A reset of the land lease occurs in 2014 which is within the proposed project period. Will the increased land lease fees cause monthly charges to become too high for some residents, thereby causing displacement?
  - On the negotiations and final pricing of the Land Lease, analyze the potential effects of the:
    - proposed zoning change
    - removal of deed restrictions/covenants on the Urban Renewal Plan
    - dissolution of the existing LSRD
- Analyze the effect of a more than 300% increase in the number of residents on the South Superblock on living conditions for those residing there – both the generally elderly population of 505 LaGuardia Place and the families with small children in the two Silver Towers, as well as the immediate neighborhood including the North Superblock and the residents of the buildings adjacent to and having frontage on both Superblocks. Will changes in living conditions cause indirect residential displacement?
- Analyze the potential for reduction in property values, causing indirect displacement and/or severe financial consequences to those who own co-operatives or condominiums adjacent to the proposed project area
  - during construction
  - after streetside green spaces have been transferred to NYU and potentially built on or under
  - after transient/community parking spaces have been removed
  - when up to 1,750 (per Draft Scope p. 26) young people with no ties or commitment to the neighborhood are added to the area
  - when a hotel facility with a transient population as well as 260 faculty residences (per Draft Scope p. 26) are added to the area
  - taking into account new shadows cast on these buildings by new NYU structures
  - across LaGuardia Place if the LaGuardia Corner Garden plants fail to thrive and/or die as a result of the shadows cast by the proposed building on the supermarket site.
- Analyze the potential increase in crime due to the enormous increase in population including young students located at the far southeastern edge of the 6th Precinct, and its effect on property values on apartments in the buildings adjacent to the Superblocks.
- Report on the square footage change in dedicated play space for toddlers and for children up to age 16, both programmed and unprogrammed, on the University Village and Washington Square Village Superblocks. Separately study both temporary and permanent replacement playground sites, and with and without the acquisition of the city-owned open space strips. Report on how the changes will affect families on and adjacent to these blocks as well as property values.
- Explain how a project that will affect so many residents in such a concentrated area can be justified, and what demographic changes can be expected when the population of students and faculty are dramatically increased thereby changing the proportions from that found in the

existing residential population.

- Report on rent-stabilized or rent-controlled residents on both the Washington Square Village block and buildings East of Washington Square Park:
  - Do added buildings, commercial tenants and/or reduction in open space dedicated to these residents have the potential to reduce the number of these residents?
  - Is an overall reduction of this type of residents possible due to the proposed plan?
- Provide an analysis of the number of mobility-impaired and elderly people that will be affected by the move of the supermarket, including whether they will lose the independence of being able to reach the supermarket unassisted, and possibly suffer indirect displacement.
- Report on the square foot reduction of non-built space on the entire University Village and Washington Square Village Superblocks, both publicly and privately owned, since the total amount of open space is an important factor in the value of owned as well as rented housing.
- Report the number of mature trees that will be destroyed as a result of the proposed plan, and its impact on the value of nearby rental and co-op housing.
- Provide clear information on plans for 14 and 15 Washington Place and any indirect residential displacement or attrition plans.
- Analyze the potential for underground water being diverted by the enormous “bathtubs” needed for the underground structures proposed for both Superblocks eroding the foundations of buildings near the Superblocks as well as possible water infiltration on sub-grade apartments and retail, and the potential for these causing a reduction in property values and/or displacement.

### **Direct Business Displacement**

- Provide information on any retail facilities that will be removed as a result of this plan, including the existing Supermarket and the stores on the retail strip on the North Superblock, as well as any other existing businesses that will be removed or relocated.

### **Indirect Business Displacement**

- Analyze the potential indirect displacement of existing community-oriented retail in favor of stores and other establishments serving the NYU population.
- Report on the likely increase in food-and-drink establishments in the proposed additional retail to be added under the plan, and the effects of increased alcohol-serving establishments on residents and businesses in the area.
- Analyze the potential for vacancies in the newly created retail if restrictions on liquor licenses, including both the 200-foot rule from the proposed school and the 500-foot rule from existing establishments, were to prevent new food-and-drink establishments from taking the new spaces.
- Report on the current retail vacancy rate and analyze the potential effects of adding the proposed maximum retail on existing stores and vacant space on:
  - the area east of Washington Square Park including 8th Street - a major retail thoroughfare
  - Broadway which is currently zoned for and amply supplied with retail

- Bleecker Street from Lafayette to Avenue of the Americas
  - North/South streets from Houston Street to 8<sup>th</sup> Street
  - The SoHo area from Canal Street to Houston Street
- Analyze the potential effect of new retail development on whether it would meet unmet needs for residents or compete with existing retail and longstanding iconic neighborhood merchants, and the effect on commercial rents on blocks including:
    - Washington Place and Waverly Place
    - Bleecker Street
    - on and near the Superblocks
  - Provide detailed information on the number, size and type of retail establishments that would be added if the proposed zoning were to be approved, both C1-7 on the Superblocks and C1-5 overlay on the area east of Washington Square Park, and analyze the current and future retail market saturation and rents.
  - Study the need for car and truck parking and loading docks for the proposed facilities, and whether these will impact accessibility to buildings throughout the Superblocks and on adjacent streets and the area east of Washington Square Park, and how reduction in parking and increase in traffic will impact property values.
  - Study the potential effects – including indirect displacement – on nearby established industries and uses such as the manufacturing, retail and arts communities and facilities in SoHo and NoHo.

\*NOTE - From the CEQR Manual:

For projects covering a large area, it may be appropriate to create subareas for analysis if the project affects different portions of the study area in different ways. For example, if a project concentrates development opportunities in one portion of the study area, and would result in higher increases in population in that portion, it may be appropriate to analyze the subarea most likely to be affected by the concentrated development.]

### 3. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

*The Draft Scope for NYU’s Plan 2031 needs to include analyses of the potential direct and indirect impacts on a variety of areas included in this category. Special attention should be paid to a careful comparison between the “No Action Alternative” and the “With Action RWCDs Alternative.”*

*With regard to the space that NYU is offering for the public school, the language on p.6 of the Draft Scope, which states, “If SCA does not utilize the space for a public school by a yet-to-be-established date prior to 2031, NYU would utilize the 100,000 square foot space for its own academic purposes” must be revised. As stated above, under General Comments, it is essential that all potential alternatives are fully studied.*

#### Public Schools

- Analyze how increased population will impact CB2 schools. Specifically, how many families will NYU bring to our district as part of the Plan 2031 expansion?
- Analyze and offer specific details as to how NYU is arriving at the 100,000 sq ft figure for a public school.

- Analyze what is the right level of public school (i.e., Elementary vs. Middle School.) Since Middle School is a district choice and not a zone choice, the need for a Middle School should include an analysis of district wide (D2) enrollment/school seats, but will largely be based on the growing Middle School population in the CB2 zone, and on the fact that parents and students do not have a Middle School choice in CB2.

Analyze the appropriateness of housing an undergraduate college dormitory above a public school. What are the School Construction Authority (SCA) and Department of Education protocols? Provide a clear description of the proposed school building, and information as to how the SCA and NYU will coordinate construction.

- Analyze the amount of outdoor space a state-of-the-art school would have and where it is best placed based on the grade-levels included. Per open space requirements, analyze if there is enough open space on the rooftop of the donated shell and core for a public school, and the appropriateness of a rooftop play yard. Rooftop play yards can be loud when they are filled with children. Analyze noise impacts on nearby buildings.
- Analyze the actual costs for NYU to provide both the "Shell and Core" for a public school. Are there differences in costs between an Elementary School, Middle School and/or High School.
- Analyze the possibility of NYU financially supporting the renovations of P.S. 3 and P.S. 41, which have been, and continue to be, attended by children of NYU faculty, and which are desperately in need of upgraded infrastructures compared to other zoned public schools. One or both of these schools are in need of a larger outdoor play space, a new cafeteria, a separate gymnasium, an elevator, and permanent seating in the auditorium, and so these areas should be included in a cost analysis.
- Analyze as an alternative to donating space within the core the costs of NYU financially supporting the purchase and construction of a new public school outside of the core. (e.g., 75 Morton Street which could potentially be used for both Middle and High School, Grade 6-12.)
- Analyze school completion timing. When would the school be completed, and will that coincide with the community's needs? Analyze viable mitigations if it is proven the community needs a school now. The school is a deferred benefit, so what will NYU do for the community in the meantime?
- Analyze as an alternative the costs of NYU financially supporting the construction of a community center fitted for a public school on the site in the core that the University has promised to the community. Analyze the costs to build classrooms, a book/reading area geared for children, a gym, a childcare center space, a senior center space, and a break room.
- Analyze the costs of NYU donating space for a community center in existing, or yet-to-be constructed NYU buildings.
- Analyze what protections the community has that a public school will actually be built, that SCA wants and can afford the space, *and that the space will not revert back to NYU under any circumstances*. Provide information on how the community will retain this mitigation even if DOE/SCA does not want to, or have the funds to, build the school. The DEIS states that NYU

will utilize this land if a public school is not built. What would be built there is currently unspecified. *NYU's Scope must provide alternatives that retain community ownership and use of this land promised by the University to the community.*

### **Fire and Ambulance**

- Analyze the fire access to the middle of Washington Square Village between the proposed extra buildings, playground and superblocks overall. How will the apparent removal of the 2-way roads crossing the northern superblock and loss of access to the existing fire lanes there increase fire hazards?
- Analyze how the removal of the N/S roads on the WSV block affect the ability of ambulances to get in, get their patients loaded, and get out.
- Analyze the impact that an additional population of 1,750 young adult students (p.26) who will most likely be freshmen, 260 dwelling units for faculty members (p.26) and constant transient hotel guests will have on the delivery of NYPD services, specifically the already understaffed 6<sup>th</sup> Precinct, to the rest of the precinct.

### **Hospitals**

- Analyze how the Proposed Action Plan and increased population will indirectly affect the community's access to services at the planned North Shore-LIJ Center for Comprehensive Care, which will have limited space and services compared to the full service St. Vincent's Hospital it is replacing.

### **Child Care**

- Analyze the impact on the displacement of the childcare facility, Creative Steps Playgroup on the ground level of WSV, which may be turned into retail, which would physically displace the childcare facility. If Creative Steps Playgroup were to be displaced, how would the displacement be mitigated by NYU?

### **Physical Fitness Facilities**

- Report on how access to and egress from the proposed "temporary gym" will be achieved, especially by busloads of visiting basketball and volleyball teams, since there is no streetside access from Mercer Street and the porticos limit the height of the vehicles that can enter the "Greene Street" N/S roadway.
- Report on the uses of the "temporary gym." As this facility will be smaller than the existing Coles, will it be more of a field house than a gym? Will any community uses even be possible? Report on how the community's access to the gym facilities will be coordinated with student access and analyze how NYU can provide increased access to the community to the "temporary gym" and, eventually, the permanent gym facility.

### **Libraries**

- Analyze how the proposed action plan and increased population will indirectly affect the community's access to its Jefferson Market Library and Hudson Park Library.

## **Places of Worship**

- Analyze the indirect effects that the proposed action plan will have on St. Anthony's Church and any other public places of worship identified to be within the study area.

## **4. OPEN SPACE**

Over a period of many years, access to parks and open space has been one of the most passionately expressed concerns among residents within the CB2 district. Our board has actively and successfully promoted creation of new open spaces, large and small, at every opportunity, and has advocated for the improvement and good care and management of existing spaces. This leadership has been consistently supported by all of our elected officials over the years. The public open spaces currently within the project area are among the parks that have been created and cared for through intense and passionate public engagement. They are part of the history and fabric of the immediate district. So it is not a surprise that the response of the community to proposals to eliminate these spaces has been intense and passionate as well. Please refer to appendices as follows:

1. A Community Board 2 Resolution opposing de-mapping public lands in the project area and supporting transfer of these spaces to the Parks Department
2. A press release to the same effect issued by elected officials for all districts in which the project area resides

This request is for substantial expansion of the scope with regard to open space in the following areas:

1. Alienation of Public Open Space
2. Need for a Full Assessment of Direct Effects on Open Space
3. Need for Special Assessments of Indirect Effects
4. Special Considerations for the Need for a Detailed Assessment
5. Staging Impacts

### **1. Alienation of Public Open Space**

- **A full review is required to evaluate legal issues related to alienation of public open space in the project area.**

Existing public open space in the project area is likely to require alienation legislation. The CEQR Technical Manual advises that when a project eliminates “or involves certain changes in use of dedicated City-owned parkland or open space, the City must have the authorization of the New York State Legislature and Governor to alienate the parkland or open space.” The project proposes transfer to NYU of City-owned land that is public open space. Some of this land has been developed with government funds dedicated for improvement of public open space and also private funds accepted by New York City for the restricted purpose of developing this land for active and passive open space use.

- a. A public playground will be built this year in LaGuardia Park on the east side of LaGuardia Place between Bleecker and West Third Streets. The area was dedicated for this purpose and the design for the park was approved through a process including review by the NYC Parks Department, Community Board 2, and the Public Design Commission, and City funds will be used for construction.
- b. Mercer Playground is public open space on Mercer Street between Bleecker and West Third Streets. The NYC Parks Department web site states “In 1995 the Department of

Transportation gave Parks a permit to use the site. Two years later the site was formally transferred to Parks, and plans were made for capital improvements. The playground construction was funded jointly by Council Member Kathryn Freed and LMNO(P) at a total cost of \$340,000. LMNO(P) raised an additional \$100,000 for the construction of the fence. Supporters included New York University, the Robinson & Benham Charitable Trust, and the Archives Fund.”

- c. NYU recently built an underground co-generation plant on public land on Mercer Street between West Third and West Fourth Streets. The easement allowing this use was part of an agreement dedicating the above ground use of this City-owned property to passive open space. Neighbors, community board members, and elected officials participated in a design process resulting in a design for this public open space that was approved by Community Board 2 and the Public Design Commission. The design includes gardens and seating areas.

A full review is needed of all possible legal issues regarding transfer of public lands, including a review of whether the proposed land transfers and/or alternatively transfer of underground easements that might impact the public open space use of the properties would require state legislation. Additionally, all prior development of public open space on these properties needs to be reviewed to determine whether there are issues regarding alienation of parklands that have received state or federal funding. A report on this review should be made available to the lead agency, the NYC Parks Department, local elected officials, and Community Board 2.

## **2. Need for a Full Assessment of Direct Effects on Open Space**

- **Determine the users of existing public open space and evaluate how the project may reduce the usability of these spaces, detract from their aesthetic qualities or impair their operation.**

The Draft Scope states that “a detailed assessment of the Proposed Actions’ direct effects on open space will be provided that considers the types, quantities, and quality of displaced publicly accessible open spaces as compared to the new publicly accessible open spaces that would result from the Proposed Actions.” This suggests that the assessment will be limited to what the CEQR Technical Manual calls “a simple comparison of conditions with and without the project and a discussion of the users affected.” But the Technical Manual states that this may be insufficient when “more information on users of that open space may be appropriate or there is ambiguity as to whether the project would reduce the usability of an open space, detract from its aesthetic qualities, or impair its operation.” As discussed in detail herein, there are reasons why replacement spaces provided by the project are not comparable to spaces that will be eliminated or significantly impacted.

- **Evaluate whether proposed replacement space within a campus environment will provide a welcoming alternative to current users. Include surveys and interviews of current users.**

Because the project will locate replacement open space away from the public streets in a manner that will surround the space with large NYU buildings and may create a campus feel, students and workers may displace residents and more information is needed regarding current open space users and the availability of other space. The relocation of active space to a more shaded area may have a negative impact on its usability and the loss of many mature trees will have a long term or even permanent impact on aesthetic qualities.

The Draft Scope indicates that there is justification for limiting the assessment of direct effects because “the proposed project intends to enhance public recreation opportunities in the Proposed Development Area by providing new and replacement open space.” However, the following

considerations indicate the need for a full review of the direct effects on the entire study area, and not just the proposed comparative analysis of existing and replacement spaces.

- **Study the basis for strong community support for existing outward facing public space on public land including consideration of the importance of the history of these spaces. (See appendices: Community Board 2 Resolution and Press Statement by Elected Officials.)**

There is strong public support for retaining the existing open spaces. There has been a strong negative public response to the proposal to eliminate the existing open spaces on City-owned land and there has been little or no public expression of support. More than 200 people attended a Community Board 2 public hearing on October 18, 2010, where 36 people spoke against replacement of the existing open spaces and no one spoke in favor. A subsequent resolution (appended hereto) was passed opposing transfer of these spaces to NYU and supporting transfer of these properties to the Parks Department. A press release (appended hereto) opposing the transfer of these spaces to NYU and supporting transfer of these properties to the Parks Department included statements from all the local elected officials: United States Congressman Jerrold Nadler, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, State Senator Tom Duane, State Assembly Member Deborah Glick, and City Council Member Margaret Chin.

- **Describe and evaluate the aesthetic character, user groups, and public accessibility of existing open space as conditioned by its placement along the streets and outside university property.**

The proposed replacement open space is substantially different in aesthetic character, user groups served and public accessibility. The existing open space on public land has direct access for neighborhood streets while the replacement space will be surrounded by large NYU campus buildings. Therefore, even without consideration of the dramatic increase of new resident students, non-resident students, and NYU faculty, employees, and visitors, the uses will likely be more associated with the campus than with the neighborhood, creating a feel more responsive to the University than to the broader community. The existing open space is connected to the adjacent streets and provides a relief to the urban grid typical of the attractiveness of other “park blocks.” Building new towers where the parks are currently located is a drastic change to the aesthetic impact of the open space. Existing open spaces, including spaces on public land and the publicly accessible Children’s Playground/Key Park are built on natural ground and support large species mature trees. These trees, as well as dozens of smaller species mature trees in other areas will be removed and the hardscape replacement spaces will support fewer trees of smaller species because all the replacement spaces will be built above occupied space and not on natural land. The gardens above the garage at Washington Square Village were designed by Sasaki, Walker and Associates and completed in 1959. They are eligible for listing in the State and National Register of Historic Places. The tranquility and historic importance of these gardens will not be replaceable in the middle of a complex of large campus towers.

- **Evaluate the location of the existing playgrounds and dog run in consideration of warmth provided by the sun, the benefit of mature, large species trees, and distance from residential windows.**

The proposed replacement open space has limited usability. The addition of new buildings and the relocation of existing open space including children’s playgrounds and spray showers to more shaded areas will reduce the usability of these spaces. A replacement for the existing dog park at Mercer and Houston Streets is sited adjacent to one of the Silver Towers residential buildings. NYC Parks Department policy does not allow placement of dog runs where noise and odor will create conflicts with residents. The location will at least limit the hours of use of the dog run which is currently used at all hours.

- **Study the importance of sun exposure to the Community Garden.**

Tall new buildings in the project area will increase the shading in existing spaces, with particularly harmful impacts on the Community Garden on LaGuardia Place south of Bleecker Street. This extraordinary space is an important resource to its participating gardeners, and also stands as a symbol of urban resiliency and civic pride. The garden provides immense pleasure to its gardeners, visitors, and passers-by. The success of the garden is threatened by shading from new towers to its east, by the intensity of new uses in the project area, and by the inevitable construction impacts.

- **Review the history of NYU stewardship of public and publicly accessible open space and evaluate the causes of admitted shortcomings.**

NYU has agreed that it has a poor track record in maintenance, management and operation of public access to open space on their property. While they have stated that they have “turned over a new leaf,” the difficulty of enforcement of public access to privately owned public space has been a widespread concern in areas such as urban plazas throughout the city. NYU would have latitude to make unilateral decisions regarding hours of access and other rules affecting campus security and institutional liability. NYU would have control over the look and feel of the open space, potentially affecting the level of public use. Access to open space for freedom of expression could be restricted on privately held land.

- **Provide qualitative and quantitative information regarding existing publicly accessible NYU-owned property including the Sasaki Garden and the Key Park.**

The Introduction section of the Draft Scope states that the project would add four new acres of publicly accessible open space. However, the Draft Scope provides insufficient quantitative analysis of the amount of added open space compared to the amount of eliminated open space. Specifically, while the Draft Scope includes in its analysis *proposed* publicly accessible private land to be added, it appears not to include *existing* publicly accessible private land that would be eliminated. The north superbloc includes two very large publicly accessible areas. The “key park” children’s playground is an active open space in Washington Square Village, directly adjacent to Mercer Playground. While NYU has restricted the degree of public access to varying degrees over the years by limiting the number of keys available to the broader community, this area is the largest and one of the most heavily used children’s playgrounds in the study area. The Sasaki Garden, located above the parking garage in Washington Square Village, is the largest passive open space in the study area other than Washington Square Park. NYU has had an inconsistent policy with regard to public access, but the area is now publicly accessible without restriction. The Coles Athletic Center was approved in 1979 based on an agreement that included public access to an acre or more of rooftop space, although NYU has failed to honor the commitments in this agreement. The loss of publicly accessible private space should be included in a quantitative analysis that also includes the addition of new publicly accessible space. This loss was not included in the analysis for the draft scope and should be corrected in the final scope. (If the space is not included in the quantitative analysis, it still should be included in the qualitative assessment of the loss of open space, and the final scope should include a full review of any conditions affecting public access to these spaces and the displacement of current uses, including during construction phases, should be part of the comparative review.)

- **Evaluate the current availability of open space in the project area for active and passive uses including division of active uses by age group.**

The project will bring large new populations of residential and non-residential young adults to an area underserved by active recreation facilities. Assess the needs of this group for open space suitable for active recreation, and assess the availability of such space in the study area.

• As described above, the project may result in physical losses of highly used public open space and changes in usability of existing open space, will limit public access to open spaces, will result in increased noise and shadows in public spaces, while also increasing the demand for open space. Therefore, a simple comparison of conditions with and without the project is not sufficient. The direct impacts require a full assessment under the procedures outlined in the CEQR Technical Manual.

### **3. Need for Special Assessments of Indirect Effects.**

• **Assess the true public accessibility to open space in the project area given the intensity of university activity in the project area, including a comparative analysis of per capita area as compared to current conditions.**

The project will have an enormous indirect impact on open space in parts of the study area close to the project area. There will be 1400 new dormitory residents and a large number of students attending classes and other university activities as well as many university employees. Given the intensity of university expansion in the area, it seems likely that on nice days between classes, at lunch hour, and at the end of the school day, students will overwhelm open space in the project area and spread into nearby open space. The replacement open space in Washington Square Village may not be useable for other than NYU populations, especially during weekday hours when NYU is in full session.

• **Assess the impact of the project on Washington Square Park, including impacts of overuse on lawn areas and the effect on current users and uses of a substantial increase of use by new residential and non-residential occupants of the project area.**

The project may have an especially significant impact on nearby Washington Square Park, a landmark open space resource of special importance for neighborhood residents as well as visitors that also has significance as a historical, cultural, and socio-economic resource. The students who will live in dormitories are in an age group that will be attracted to the special spaces in Washington Square and will create new use pressures in this overcrowded park, potentially pushing out current users and having a significant effect on current and historical uses. This age group will also seek opportunities for active uses that pose a threat to damage the newly renovated lawns in Washington Square that are intended for passive use only.

• **Assess the impact of the project on NoHo, an underserved area for public open space.**

The indirect effects on open space will have an especially significant impact on residents of NoHo, an underserved area, and on current residents in the project area and in immediately adjacent areas. Residents who depend on access to existing open space within the project area will be particularly vulnerable to the pressures caused by large numbers of new residents and new daytime visitors who will use the proposed replacement open spaces.

• **Assess the impact of the project on the availability of existing active recreation facilities in the study area. Evaluate current availability of active open space, including separate analysis by ages served, and assess the effect of the project.**

The indirect effects on open space will have an especially significant impact on active open space in the project area. The areas surrounding the project area have very limited access to active recreational space such as ball fields and basketball courts. Passanante Park, just three blocks away, is the only large hard surface play area in the study area and is a vital resource for neighborhood residents, including

families with children, and for nearby schools. With no other nearby facilities suitable for activities such as Frisbee games, project occupants may cause pressures that reduce access of neighborhood residents to active recreation.

#### **4. Special Considerations for the Need for a Detailed Assessment.**

A simple quantitative preliminary assessment should not be used to obviate the need for a Detailed Assessment because

- a. There will be especially significant impacts on NoHo, an underserved residential area with no nearby alternative open space if use of open space in the project area is reduced.
- b. There will be especially significant impacts on residential areas in and immediately adjacent to the project area with no nearby alternative open space if use of open space in the project area is reduced.
- c. The user group composed of students residing and attending classes in the project area has higher than average needs for open space area and their use of open space will be highly focused in the project area and very nearby.
- d. The relatively high current open space ratio in the project area as compared to the study area means changes to open space use in the project area have a disproportionate effect on open space use near the project area as compared to their effect on the study area.
- e. Inadequacy of open space within the intensively used project area will have a cascading impact on nearby open space greater than the impact of the increased number of students on the open space ratio for the entire study area.

The project represents a major growth of NYU within its current core area. This is identified by NYU as one of four planning principles. The result will be a significant increase in the intensity of NYU activities in the project area, leading to a substantially increased presence of students in the project area as well as a greatly increased flow of students in and out. The project will also greatly increase the number of NYU visitors in the area as well as the volume of commercial activity in the area, and will create special new open space needs for students of a new elementary school, needs which may be in conflict or competition with the needs of NYU students.

**• Perform detailed evaluations of current resources including surveys and interviews. Field surveys, performed while NYU is in full session, should assess the current active and passive use of nearby open space by NYU students.**

**• Provide detailed analysis of the impact on Washington Square Park, a special resource with enormous value to residents, nearby and citywide, and visitors**

With respect to Washington Square Park, surveys should be done after areas of the park closed for Phase 2 reconstruction are reopened. Assessments should focus on park use during weekday hours when students are moving between classes or leaving educational activities for the day and evaluate user groups within the park as well as the impact of university and project related crowds on the perimeter of the park, e.g. with respect to the common use of the park perimeter for jogging and walking. Also, in Washington Square Park, data should be collected on active use by NYU students of lawns intended for passive use to help assess the extent of need for more active open space areas as

student activity is intensified in an area.

- **Compare existing use of publicly accessible open space in the campus setting to existing public space in the project area.**

The impact of large numbers of students and employees within the project area requires detailed evaluation including study of the total number of people from the project area likely to use and walk through the space. The assessment should include surveys of publicly accessible campus-like spaces such as Gould Plaza to evaluate their usability for public access. Surveys during weekdays when NYU is in full session should be included, especially at class-change times. The total number of resident and non-resident students anticipated in the project area, as well as employees and visitors, should be used in determining whether replacement open space surrounded by large university buildings will function well as publicly accessible open space.

- **Provide detailed analysis including field surveys and interviews to determine the impacts of the loss of the “key park” and Sasaki Garden as currently located.**

If a survey of an open space determines a space is under-utilized, the cause of disuse should be evaluated to determine if it is associated with a lack of demand or with an historical or administrative cause. For example, the residents in surrounding communities should be interviewed to determine the level of awareness regarding public access to current publicly accessible spaces such as the Sasaki Garden.

- **Perform surveys and interviews to evaluate comparative value to non-NYU residents of inward versus outward facing open space.**

NYU states in its draft scoping document that they seek “to design publicly accessible open space to be an integrated network of attractive spaces that are welcoming to the general public.” The project intentionally eliminates public open space on the street sides of the project area in favor of a large central hardscape surrounded by NYU educational and residential buildings. The hypothesis that this will improve public usability of open space is counter-intuitive and needs assessment. Field surveys should be designed to evaluate current user groups for open space with in-facing orientation such as Schwartz and Gould Plaza as compared to those with out-facing orientation such as the Co-Gen plaza and the sitting area outside Coles.

Users in particular groups, such as seniors, who are particularly subject to dislocation, should be interviewed to determine whether proposed replacement open space will serve their special needs.

- **Provide a detailed assessment of the comparative value of the public spaces on Mercer Street between Houston and Bleecker Streets versus the proposed relocation of uses to the other side of the “Zipper building.”**

This is problematic because the children’s playground and reflecting garden areas on Mercer Street have fallen into disrepair and disuse. However, as in Washington Square Village, the project moves public space here from the street to areas separated from the street by campus buildings. The usability of the new space by the general public needs to be reviewed in consideration of the proposed intensity of NYU use of the project area. As mentioned above, the proposed location of the dog run directly below many residential windows suggests a likely loss of usability that requires assessment.

- **Provide a full historical review of intentions and agreements regarding all spaces in the project area, including access to the Coles roof, gym, and pool, and also NYU responsibilities to manage and maintain publicly accessible areas.**

The draft scope asserts that the project will add four acres of new public space. However, no clear evaluation is available of the status of public accessibility to existing private space within the project area. The comparative analysis of lost open space and replacement open space needs to evaluate the number and size of trees, the percentage of hardscape versus natural ground, increased winter shading caused by new buildings and location of open space features as well as decreased availability of summer shade from large trees, and various kinds of seating.

- **Assess the impact of new retail stores on Washington Square**

Currently, there is minimal retail on streets surrounding the park. A commercial overlay in the blocks east of Washington Square Park, including in buildings across the street from the park, will have impacts on the park that require assessment. Depending on the size and type of stores, based on crowds attracted to stores in the nearby Broadway commercial area, substantial crowds may be drawn to these blocks with significant increases to visitors and pass-through pedestrians. Park use in Washington Square should be compared to park use in Union Square and Madison Square where there is existing adjacent commercial use and park users should be interviewed to assess the potential significance of the commercial overlay. Similarly, the hotel and other commercial uses made possible by proposed C1-7 zoning for inside the project area should be evaluated with regard to impacts on existing and planned open space there.

- **Identify existing open space in the study area where current use is near or above capacity.**

Throughout the residential open space study area, conditions of high intensity of use in existing open space need to be separately evaluated for both passive and active areas, and compared to city-wide norms. Where use of open space is at or near capacity, the likelihood of significant impacts from the project is greater. Targeted mitigations may be required for each open space that is currently at or near capacity.

- **The Adequacy of Open Space needs to be assessed for sub-sections of the study area based on the increase caused by the project of the residential and non-residential populations.**

There is a likely substantial increase in demand for both passive and active use of open space. College students have high open space needs, both active and passive.

- There will be an increased demand for passive open space because of the increased number of daytime visitors to the area.
- There will be an increased demand for active open space based on the ages of the people brought to the area as a result of the project.
- The project will replace the current predominance of community residents in open spaces in the immediate area to the extent that current users may be displaced in some open spaces by newcomers. This has occurred on various streets near NYU over the past decade, such as University Place. The study needs to develop effective qualitative analysis tools to assess whether the non-NYU users will retain a critical mass presence in the new and pre-existing open space or whether they may be marginalized by new residential and non-residential populations.

- **Evaluate the impact to the demolition of Coles on current community users.**

How many residents will be affected? Will there be community access to the temporary gym?  
Will there be community access to the new permanent gym and pool?

## **5. Staging Impacts**

### **• Evaluate the impacts on access to open space during the development period.**

Review and analyze the impact of the extended development period caused by short- and mid-term loss of open space prior to completion of replacement open space including but not limited to Mercer Playground, LaGuardia Park, Community Garden, Key Park, dog run, Sasaki Garden, etc.

We are especially concerned that building a temporary gym in the northern superblock, on the site of the Key Park and Sasaki Garden will significantly reduce the amount of open space and recreational opportunities available during construction. In order to fully understand this impact, we must have specific information regarding phasing and project time frames.

## **6. Alternatives**

### **• Project alternatives to be evaluated should include those that**

- (1) retain all existing public open space without new underground use and supporting current uses
- (2) retain the Sasaki Garden and Key Park in current locations and
- (3) provide new open space for active use within the project area.

## **5. SHADOWS**

*The CEQR Technical Manual requires a shadow analysis on publicly accessible open space or historic resource with sun-sensitive features. In addition to these required analyses, CB2 seeks to draw attention to the following shadow analysis areas:*

In all cases:

- Study air flow; shadows cause lack of tree growth, causing loss of Co2 filters
- Study quality of life; effect of tall buildings blocking sunlight on human physical, physiological, mental, and emotional health.
- All buildings
  - Impact on property interiors and exteriors
  - Impact on property values – Possible eminent domain requiring just compensation?

### **West Side of Mercer Street between Houston and West 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets**

*Study potential for shadows and their:*

- Impact on property interiors and exteriors
- Impact on property values – possible eminent domain requiring just compensation?
- Impact on vegetation
- Impact of shadows on windows of buildings near any new multi-story buildings

- Loss of light and increase in shadows on Mercer Street between Bleecker and Houston Streets because of the height of the proposed Zipper building (“Valley of Darkness”) and on areas surrounding the Zipper building in general
- Loss of light and increase in shadows on Mercer Street between Bleecker and West 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets because of the proposed “Boomerang” building
- What will be the shadow on the buildings, on the street and inside the Mercer-facing apartments? There is currently direct and indirect sunlight entering Mercer-facing apartments through most of the day on most of the days of the year. What would be the effect of the proposed Superblock buildings?

### **LaGuardia Place**

*Study potential for shadows and their:*

- Impact on property interiors and exteriors
- Impact on property values - Possible eminent domain requiring just compensation?
- Impact on vegetation
- Impact of shadows on windows of buildings near any new multi-story buildings.

### **Block 525, LaGuardia Between Houston and Bleecker**

*Study potential for shadows and their:*

- Impact on property interiors and exteriors
- Impact on property values
- Impact on vegetation
- Impact of shadows on windows of buildings near any new multi-story buildings.

### **Time Landscape**

Landscape Artist Alan Sonfist created Time Landscape as a living monument to the Manhattan forest inhabited by Native Americans and encountered by Dutch Settlers in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. This is green parkland maintained by the NYC Department of Parks under Greenstreets.

*Study potential for shadows and effects on:*

- Impact on variety of trees and other vegetation in landscape work of art
- Impact on insects
- Impact on animal life

### **LaGuardia Community Garden**

*Study potential for shadows and their:*

- Impact on vegetation
- Impact on insects
- Impact on animal life
- Impact on flowering time of milkweed, which is the food source of Monarchs in the larval stage (LaGuardia Corner Garden has been a registered Monarch Waystation [#1766] since September 2007)

- Impact on the development of the larvae and what effect will that have on Monarch populations
- Impact on other insects such as sphinx moths, Admiral butterfly, Eastern Swallowtail and their food sources.
- Impact on mature apple and pear trees, which require 6-8 hours of direct sunlight daily to produce fruit.

### **Proposed New Children’s Playground on North Side of Buildings 3&4, Washington Square Village**

*Study potential for shadows and their:*

- Impact on safety given loss of light
- Impact on vitality of playground if shadowed and sunlight lost
- Impact on vitamin D absorption due to loss of light

### **Mercer Street Dog Run**

*Study potential for shadows and their:*

- Impact on dog run vitality
- Impact on safety given loss of light
- Reviewed in greater detail in Open Space Section

### **Proposed Open Space Areas**

*Study potential for shadows and their:*

- Impact on vegetation
- Impact on insects
- Impact on animal life
- Potential negative impact on the inviting nature of these areas

### **Morton Williams site**

*Study potential for shadows and their potential effects on:*

- Monarch butterfly population
- LaGuardia Corner Garden plantings
- 505 LaGuardia Place windows
- Windows across LaGuardia Place

### **University Village – Landmarked**

*Study potential for shadows and their potential effects on:*

- Impact on property interiors and exteriors
- Property values
- How the impact of shadows from multi-story buildings affect the landmarked landscaping of the southern superblock, including grass surrounding the historically and culturally significant “Bust of Sylvette.”

## **Washington Square Village – Eligible for Inclusion in the National Register per the New York State Historic Preservation Office**

*Study potential for shadows and effects on:*

- Impact of shadows on historic structures - interior and exterior
- Impact of shadows on Community Gardens
- Impact of shadows on Sasaki, Walker & Assoc. roof garden, one of the earliest parking structure roof gardens in the country
- Impact on site lines of a Corbusian-inspired “Tower in the Park” aesthetic
- Impact of shadows on the Cable Building at 611 Broadway

### **6. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

*Greenwich Village, and especially the area being studied, is rich in historic and cultural resources that may be impacted by the proposed development. From the legendary people – writers, musicians, performers and more - who lived and worked in this area to the architecture and public art, careful study is warranted. Some of the items addressed below have been considered in greater detail in the following sections: Shadows, Neighborhood Character, Urban Design and Visual Resources, and Construction Impacts.*

#### **General Impacts**

A broader consideration should be undertaken of direct and indirect impacts of sightlines to and from various historically designated sites, sites eligible for designation, specific historic structures, and cultural resources.

- Applicant must provide details of designs in a scoping document involving historically designated properties, those eligible for designations and the rich historic and cultural value of the area.
- Consider a more thoughtful analysis of direct and indirect impacts on nearby historic districts and individually landmarked buildings (designated and eligible/calendared).
- Provide an analysis of potential physical damage to historically designated property, individual landmarked buildings, and sites eligible for designation, and nearby historic districts and individually landmarked properties.
- Study impact of NYU’s presence and space utilization on ability for preexisting and other community cultural facilities to take root.
- Study impact of expansion on plans to replace the Children’s Aid Society at the same or an alternate location.
- Study effect of continuing transformation of historical sites, small businesses, into a university campus; loss of vibrant community to university “campus.”
- Study effect of concentration of all resources in one monolithic entity.

- Study effect of diminishing experiences, contributions, and pride of non-academic members of the community.
- Provide an analysis of the impact of proposed commercial development in historical buildings on the character and aesthetic quality of these buildings.
- Proposed development may create street walls incompatible with neighborhood.

### **Alternatives**

- Study implication of not acquiring or building under the City-owned strips.
- Zipper building: consider alternative aesthetics to comport with historic design of the area. It does not relate to the spatial constraints, nor to loft buildings in the historic NoHo to the east or tower-in-the-park with Historic Register-eligible WSV or University Village.

### **University Village (a/k/a/ Silver Towers and 505 LaGuardia Place)**

- Landmarks Preservation Commission – Designation List 407, LP-2003 (November 18, 2008)
  - Boundaries- 100 and 110 Bleecker Street (aka Silver Towers I & II, 98-122 Bleecker Street and 40-58 West Houston Street) and 505 LaGuardia Place (aka 487-507 LaGuardia Place and 64-86 West Houston Street). Built 1964-67; I. M. Pei & Associates, architect; James Ingo Freed, chief designer.

#### ***Quotes from the 2008 Designation Report:***

- “University Village is one of the finest examples of a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century residential complex located in New York City.” (p. 1)
- “Occupying a five-acre ‘superblock’ in Greenwich Village, between West Houston and Bleecker Streets, the site was originally part of a much larger urban renewal scheme conceived by Robert Moses, chairman of the Mayor’s Committee on Slum Clearance, in 1953. **As part of NYU’s agreement with the city to take over the site in 1960, the school set aside one-third of the units for middle-income residents.** (emphasis added)
- “The complex includes three identical free-standing 30-story towers executed in reinforced concrete that are positioned at the center of the site in a “pinwheel” configuration around a 100-by-100 foot lawn. The west tower, at 505 LaGuardia Place, is a cooperative residence with a long-term lease from NYU, and the east towers serve as faculty housing.”
- “The buildings were thoughtfully arranged by Freed to maximize views and privacy, as well as to increase general visual interest.”
- “Near the center of the complex stands a large sandblasted concrete sculpture, an enlargement of a 1954 cubistic work by Pablo Picasso. Executed in 1968 by the French artist’s frequent collaborator, the Norwegian sculptor Carl Nesjar, the off-center placement of the 36-foot tall bust echoes and enhances the project’s dynamic

plan.”

- The complex has been deemed among “the most refined examples of modern architecture in Manhattan” (architecture curator, Terence Riley).
- SHPO deemed University Village eligible for inclusion in the National Register in February 2009

***Quotes from SHPO’s 2009 Evaluation:***

- “Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.”
- “Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possesses high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction.”
- “Though less than 50 years of age, University Village is exceptionally significant in the areas of architectural design and planning. Upon its completion, University Village was a critical success and won accolades from the American Institute of Architects, the City Club of New York, the Concrete Industry Board, and Fortune Magazine. Later, in 1983, when Pei was honored with the Pritzker Architecture Prize, University Village was cited as one of his most notable works.”

**Washington Square Village**

In February 2011, the New York State Historic Preservation Office (“SHPO”) determined that Washington Square Village, bounded by West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Bleecker Street, Mercer Street & LaGuardia Place, meets the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the National Register. The specific criteria met are as follows:

- “Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possesses high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction.”

Note that SHPO’s determination concurred with the Landmarks Preservation Commission’s May 21, 2007 determination that Washington Square Village appeared to be eligible for National Register listing.

***SHPO further opined as follows:***

- “It is the opinion of the SHPO that the superblock complex of two residential towers, elevated landscaped plaza, commercial strip, and below-grade parking meets Criterion C as an impressive example of postwar urban renewal planning and design. Paul Lester Wiener working with S.J. Kessler & Sons Architects designed the complex which was constructed between 1956 and 1958. The towers are notable for their vibrant blue, yellow and red glazed brickwork that contrasts with the field of grey glazed brick. Corbusian influences are shown by the sculptural elements hiding mechanical equipment on the roof and the pilotis forms at the bases.”

Sasaki, Walker & Associates were responsible for the landscape, which is one of the earliest parking structure roof gardens in the country.

- The garden between the two slab buildings was designed by Hideo Sasaki and Peter Walker and their associates, and was one of the earliest parking structure roof gardens to be built in this country. It was planned as an integral part of this modernist apartment complex, ensuring air space and light between the enclosing blocks, and providing an area of beauty and tranquility for the surrounding community.

***The EIS should include information on the following:***

- Impact of inappropriate masses and heights of two proposed “Boomerang” buildings. In particular, height of Mercer building is too tall.
- No details have been provided of construction elements and how they would comport with aesthetics of both Washington Square Village and University Village, if at all.
- No details have been provided as to changes in the bottom floors of Washington Square Village.

**7. URBAN DESIGN AND VISUAL RESOURCES**

*The proposed area was carefully and thoughtfully designed by some of the time’s most prominent architects: James Ingo Freed, a partner of I.M. Pei for the South Superblock, and Paul Lester Weiner, a former partner of Le Corbusier for the North Superblock. The North block was designed and built first, and the South block was designed with the North block’s aesthetic as well as the open space to the east and west on the block, as key considerations. Both Pei and Weiner were followers of Le Corbusier’s “tower-in-the-park” paradigm which requires that increased height be balanced by a proportional increase in open space. The study of the proposed project’s urban design and visual resources should be analyzed with this in mind.*

**For both the North and South Superblocks:**

- Define clearly exactly what changes are anticipated as part of the LSGD special permit concerning urban design features including height and setback waivers, floor area and open space redistribution, as well as building textures and materials, landscape design and plantings, and view corridors.
- Examine the effects of floor area and open space redistributions across zoning boundary lines on pedestrian comfort and orientation and community scale, identity and continuity.
- Analyze the effects of proposed de-mapping of parts of LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street on pedestrian comfort, enjoyment and general experience of the street, community context, image and identification, and reduced streetscape enhancement.
- Assess the impacts of increased building heights and bulk on blockage of sunlight, obscuring sightlines, obstruction of view corridors, reduced air circulation and creation of wind tunnels.
- Assess the effects of proposed conflicting architectural styles, forms and materials on community context, image, coherence, architectural mix and integrity, and area cohesiveness.

- Evaluate the impact of greater building bulk and height and re-aligned building and open space relationships on open space access, use, high-rise and low-rise interplay, and experience of community belonging and ownership.
- Analyze the effects of ambient lighting from proposed new buildings.
- Analyze placement of new curb cuts resulting from the proposed new development and their potential for interfering with streetscape continuity and image, urban essence and area cohesiveness.
- Study the impact on the existing path and sightlines of Greene and Wooster Streets preserved by previous efforts.

The above applies to both the North and South Blocks. The following are additional specifics to consider in each individual section.

### **North Block**

- Assess the impact of recladding the ground level and second floors of Washington Square Village on historical context, neighborhood recognition, community image and loss of urban interest and variety.
- Study and compare alternative scenarios with different heights, bulk, shapes and orientations as alternatives to the two proposed new “boomerang” buildings in terms of taking up less open space and street space, having a more harmonious/less jarring effect in the urban design context, providing a more open pedestrian experience and obscuring less sunlight.
- Study setting back the two proposed “boomerang” buildings to align with the east and west edges of Washington Square Village (instead of jutting out) and alternative forms of the two buildings in these alignments.
- Assess disorientation resulting from the two proposed “boomerang” buildings obscuring existing view corridors and driveways.

### **South Block**

- Analyze effect of amassed bulk of proposed buildings on Mercer Street on light and air.
- Assess impact on the pedestrian experience of crowding of buildings on Mercer Street regarding blocked access, lack of openness, imposing bulk and loss of open space and airiness.
- Evaluate effects of proposed “zipper building” on urban design context, including lack of continuity, blockage of sunlight, creation of shadows, difference in scale, intrusion on sightlines and confusing form and setbacks.
- Study and compare the following four alternatives:
  - (i) erecting the Zipper building set back from Mercer Street to retain the current city-owned parkland strip (as the Coles gymnasium currently does);
  - (ii) erecting the Zipper building set back from Mercer Street to retain the current city-owned

parkland strip (as the Coles gymnasium currently does) and rising no taller than 23 feet above ground (the current height of Coles gymnasium);  
(iii) erecting the Zipper building rising no taller than 23 feet above ground (the current height of the Coles gymnasium); and  
(iv) erecting the Zipper building set back from Mercer Street to retain the current city-owned parkland strip (as the Coles gymnasium currently does) and rising no taller than 23 feet above ground from the midpoint of the block to the north (Bleecker) and stepping up or rising taller than 23 feet but no higher than 280 feet above ground from the midpoint of the block to the south (Houston).

- Evaluate the impact of moving the dog run and putting a building there on reducing open space, removing a green and airy environment, and curtailing social activity.
- Study the alternative scenario of changing the design of the building proposed at the dog run site to become cantilevered (to allow the dog run to remain).

## 8. NATURAL RESOURCES

*For all of the categories related to direct environmental impacts including Natural Resources, Hazardous Materials, Water and Sewer Infrastructure, Solid Waste and Sanitation Services, Energy, Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Noise and Public Health, we understand that the CEQR Technical Manual calls for explicit areas of study, and that the University will be conducting preliminary analyses and only conduct further analyses if required based on the results. We would like to see all of the study results for all preliminary analyses, and further for each of these categories we want to call attention to our specific concerns.*

- A detailed map of underground water is required.
- How will the increased number of “bathtubs” force and/or redirect this water? If water is restricted and/or redirected from the locations of the proposed buildings, it will be forced into other pathways leading to erosion of the foundations of the existing buildings that do not have underground protection.
- How will the loss of mature trees affect groundwater? (Past construction projects by NYU have involved extensive pumping of ground water stemming from Minetta Creek and its tributaries. Recorded data by community groups have detailed the loss of mature trees in the area that are attributable to such pumping.)
- Analysis of ground water pumping and its effect on the flora and tree-life in the project area is vital.
- How would the plan affect the habitat and viability of the red-tailed hawks that have developed, rather precariously, in the neighborhood? Red-tailed hawks are a majestic species rarely seen in urban areas, and thus treasured by bird-watchers and other community members. Red-tailed hawks have been seen for the last few years in the development area, and this spring even nested on the edge of Washington Square Park. How would the Plan (particularly the addition of large buildings, the diminution of park space, the removal of mature trees, the increase in population density, and poisons used to control rodents brought from additional garbage flows) affect their viability?

- What will the effects of pit excavation and soil removal be for:
  - Absorption of rainwater and storm water runoff
  - Air quality from removal of mature canopy of trees
  - Effect of deep earth removal, pit construction, on all natural resources in a 500' radius from surveyed dimensions of pit. (Mature trees, plantings, wildlife, springs, groundwater.)
- Information should be furnished on all aspects of ground stabilization within the immediate and surrounding areas. Monitors must be installed in buildings in the surrounding areas and the monitors' results must be posted online regularly.
- Vibration monitors must be installed in buildings in the surrounding areas and these monitors' results must be posted online regularly.

## **9. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

- Please share all results of Phase I studies because there will be implications for what we think is important for Phase II.
- The root cause of the No. 6 heating oil leak has not been announced. Since a number of buildings at NYU continue to hold this type of heating oil, it is important to know what caused the leak. Moreover, since there will be significant vibrations in the immediate vicinity of the other Washington Square Village buildings, it is important the remaining tanks are permanently abandoned.
- Please give an outline of the age of all heating oil tanks used by NYU and the type of oil used.
- Which buildings have asbestos?
- What hazardous materials will be used during construction?
- Will there be new hazardous materials used in the buildings after completion?

## **10. WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE**

- What is the anticipated increase in demand on the New York City water supply?
- How will the increased demand affect water pressure in the surrounding areas?
- The draft scope should include a discussion of all new/proposed residential, commercial, hotels, and sports arenas that City Planning has approved by a zoning change or as of right in the Newtown Creek Catch Basin, and the impact that it will have in our area concerning the generation of waste water and storm water.

- All analyses need to include the net effect of permanent residents, employees, and transients. Their impact on our district and its infrastructure must be addressed given the condition/capabilities of our fresh and waste water systems and their limited capacities

## **11. SOLID WASTE AND SANITATION SERVICES**

Solid waste and its collection is a major concern. We have these questions that apply to both during construction and after completion:

- Will NYU compost?
- Will the private carters they hire collect during the night hours or during the daytime?
- Will they build adequate and accessible storage space for solid waste and recyclables?
- Will they be installing "insinkers"?
- What measures will be instituted to promote reuse and waste prevention?
- Will they be compacting unsorted waste?
- What will they do with hazardous waste?
- Specifically where will the refuse be collected by the private carters and which streets will be used to access those locations?
- Which days of the week and at which times will refuse be collected?
- An analysis needs to be made of the amount (in tons) and types of waste that will be created during construction and after completion.
- Private carters notoriously ignore the requirement to report their pick up and disposal of any materials including putrescibles, recyclables and hazardous waste. NYU must deal only with contractors willing to disclose regularly what they pick up, when and how it is subsequently handled. Example: Plan to sort solid waste at the source might assure proper handling, otherwise there is no assurance that the contractor will separate recyclable, compostable or hazardous waste from any other.

## **12. ENERGY**

- All new buildings should achieve LEED Gold standards.
- What is the capacity of the Co-Gen facility and at what point will its capacity be met? What is the "buildable" or "add-on" capacity for the Co-Gen facility?
- Will NYU consider, or will NYU find it necessary, to add another Co-Gen facility due to this project?

- What impact will this project have on the New York City steam, natural gas, and electric grid/systems? How much of these energy sources will be consumed during and after construction?
- How will the proposed construction alter NYU's current energy usage and management plans/strategies?
- Considering the height of some of the projected buildings, has NYU studied the installation of solar power and rooftop gardens?
- Will NYU consider requiring directed high-efficiency lighting to be used on the project construction sites in order to reduce energy use and direct lighting away from residential windows?

### 13. TRANSPORTATION

*NYU's proposed changes will cause increases in vehicular and pedestrian traffic that will impact already congested and overused streets, approach corridors and parking accommodations, as well as causing increased use of public transportation. CB2 believes that NYU's Draft Scope shows an insufficient study area as well as inadequate study times and locations.*

#### Vehicles

- The study should include not only intersections in the immediate study area, but should be extended to include approach routes to the study area, i.e. travel corridors, and what the impact of the increased development and commercial use will have in generating vehicular trips on these already congested corridors. For example:
  - Approaches from the Holland, Lincoln and Queens Midtown Tunnels and from the East River Bridges.
  - Bleecker Street – from the western area.
  - Varick Street.
  - Avenue of the Americas.
  - Broadway.
  - Mercer Street.
  - West Broadway.
  - Washington Square South and West 4<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - Fourth Avenue/Bowery.
  - University Place.
- The study also should be extended to include times of day beyond the typical time periods assigned as critical peak hours (i.e. weekdays am, midday, pm) because of other periods of high traffic volume, in particular evening hours, including late evening on weekend nights (especially Friday and Saturday, but also Thursday and Sunday), when the area is often used for access to downtown clubs and other entertainment, also expected to increase with increased student populations.
- In addition to the intersections already cited in the draft scope of work, the effects of increased vehicular traffic (on both congestion and safety) should also be assessed at the following pedestrian crossings that are already dangerous and crowded:

- Washington Square South and LaGuardia Place.
  - Washington Square East and West 4<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - Cross streets along Washington Square South.
  - Midblock crossings, particularly on West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street between LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street, as well as Bleecker Street between LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street.
  - Mercer Street.
  - Broadway and Washington Place (which leads to the center of the proposed commercial overlay).
  - Greene Street and Washington Place (narrow intersection – potential traffic flow impact).
  - Greene Street and West 4<sup>th</sup> Street (narrow intersection – potential traffic flow impact).
  - Bleecker Street up to Broadway.
- Assess the impact on pedestrian safety from added turning movements at already dangerous turning areas, including:
    - LaGuardia Place at Washington Square South.
    - LaGuardia Place at West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.
    - LaGuardia Place at Bleecker Street.
    - LaGuardia Place at Houston Street.
    - Mercer Street at Bleecker Street.
  - Analyze the impact from added density of increased delivery trucks and service vehicles such as sanitation trucks and oil deliveries on street congestion and pedestrian safety, especially on already clogged and dangerous streets such as West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Bleecker Street between LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street, as well as the effects of increased deliveries in the proposed commercial overlay.
  - Assess the increase in emergency vehicular traffic and its impact on local streets, as well as the potential for blocked emergency vehicle access.
  - Assess the additional need for parking for students, faculty, NYU staff, residents, and businesses by group, numbers and times of day.
  - Analyze the effects of the loss of 281 below-grade parking spaces and the relocation of 389 relocated below-grade parking spaces, as well as the impact of the loss of on-street parking, on circling of traffic searching for street parking, including on safety, congestion and emissions impacts, especially in light of a significant increase in both permanent and transient parkers.
  - Assess the need for additional curb cuts and driveways and their impact on pedestrian safety and access, as well as on the loss of on-street parking.
  - Analyze how increased traffic, particularly at peak times, will affect accessibility to residences.
  - Assess the effects of new traffic patterns and circulation based on moving the entrance at Washington Square Village.
  - Analyze the impact of the proposed hotel, faculty accommodations and dorms in the Zipper building on producing additional trips and accompanying congestion and safety concerns.

- Assess the effects of increased traffic and noise because of the much greater density and retail proposed for the Zipper Building.
- Assess the effects of additional limo and taxi traffic.
- Assess the effects of expanded NYU bus service (as well as school buses for the proposed school) on street congestion and potential accommodations.
- Analyze the projected modal split in the study area and how it will differ from current conditions in terms of impact on access, safety, and congestion.
- Assess the increase in noise and emissions from all types of increased vehicular traffic and congestion.
- Analyze the impact of visiting sports team buses and accommodation of their northwest passage on congestion, cruising, safety and air quality.

### **Pedestrians**

- Extend pedestrian analysis locations to the commercial overlay area and street and sidewalk connections between the commercial overlay area and the development area.
- Analyze the impact of additional foot traffic in the commercial overlay area on sidewalks that are already heavily used at similar times of day.
- Analyze the impact of additional platoons of pedestrians at already crowded crossings and overloaded sidewalks on sidewalk congestion and crossing safety, for example at:
  - Washington Square South and LaGuardia Place.
  - Washington Square South and Washington Square East.
  - West 4<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - Bleecker Street.
- Analyze the effects of narrowed sidewalks on Mercer Street in both the North and South Blocks on pedestrian access and sidewalk congestion.
- Assess the impacts of increased vehicular traffic on access and mobility for seniors, the disabled and children.

### **Transit**

- Assess need for increased bus service and frequency, including the need for restoration of as well as additional bus service and routes.
- Assess need to restore and re-open closed subway entrances and to restore/provide on-site service employees (token booths, etc.) at these entrances in light of increased usage. Include evening hours in this study in addition to usual am/pm peak hours.
- Assess need to increase subway trip frequencies.

- Assess potential for sidewalk crowding and interference with subway access on way to identified subway stops.

### **Bicycles**

- Assess impact of increased bicycle trips on both bike riders and pedestrians and assess bicycle safety, access and parking.

## **14. AIR QUALITY**

- How would wind patterns be affected by new buildings? Abnormally high winds are sometimes created by large buildings in close proximity, which compress air into narrow gaps between the buildings.
- How would wind patterns affect noise, the stability of windows and exterior window screens, and flying debris?
- It is vital that all vehicles and equipment used during construction use Ultra-Low Sulfur Diesel and Best Available Technology for contaminant filtration.
- A study of air quality during the summer and winter months from increased congestion, both traffic and human, on ground-level ozone levels.
- Air quality studies during both summer and winter months for increased particulate matter (including but not limited to pollen, dust, elemental carbon, etc.) are necessary for both before, during, and after construction.
- Third-party air monitoring throughout a five-block radius is mandatory and the results must be posted online weekly.
- Will delivery trucks and additional buses resulting from the expansion utilize diesel fuel? If so, how much additional particulate will be generated into our air?
- To prevent a generation growing up over the 19-year period with asthma-inducing dust, diesel fumes/particulates and elevated ozone, we encourage NYU to explore incorporating language specifying use of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel with Best Available Technology for non-road vehicles in contracts with contractors and sub-contractors used for the project.

## **15. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

- It is indicated on page 44 of the NYU Draft Scope of Work that Greenhouse Gas emissions estimates will be discussed and quantified “if deemed potentially significant.” These estimates must be quantified and discussed under any and all circumstances, regardless of their anticipated significance.

- What are the likely greenhouse gas emissions from the proposed school, from idling school buses and cars picking up and dropping off children? This should be estimated with the actual idling averages rather than based on legally mandated idling restrictions.
- Precisely how many trees will be removed? Using this number in consideration of the ages of the trees removed, what will be the effect of the removal of these trees on nature's ability to convert pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and filter carbon dioxide from air.

## 16. NOISE

*The effects of the addition of so many young people in the area with an established and aging population is a concern for environmental study. Even if the DEP finds that the concomitant noise level after construction is not raised by the benchmark 3DBs, it will certainly change in content and character.*

- On Page 45 of the NYU Draft Scope of Work, Task 17, paragraph 2 states: "...it is not expected that project-generated traffic would be likely to result in significant noise impacts. It is assumed that outdoor mechanical equipment would be designed to meet applicable regulations and no detailed analysis of potential noise impacts due to outdoor mechanical equipment will be performed." It is imperative that a study of noise impacts is performed and mitigation measures discussed.
- Late-night noise generated by students is a major problem in our community. How will the expansion and revolving temporary populations not exacerbate this problem? What mitigation measures will be put into place?
- What will the increased vehicular traffic have on noise levels (e.g. ambient, horn honking, engine idling, etc.) both during and after construction?
- Where will new HVAC units be placed? What effects will these units have on noise levels? What will the mitigation measures be? Will any HVAC units currently in use be replaced/moved during or after construction?
- What will be the noise levels of refuse collection trucks during and after construction?
- Will there be expanded lab and science rooms that will require large air handlers; if so where will they be located?

## 17. PUBLIC HEALTH

- How would health be affected, generally? The ways different populations would be affected (children, adults, seniors, those with a compromised immune system, etc.) in terms of sleep disruption, elevated blood pressure, and psychological effects must be discussed.

- What are the risks of injury from airborne objects and debris due to heightened winds, particularly for small children and seniors?
- How will the burden on local emergency rooms (diminished by the closing of St. Vincent's) be affected by the added population to the neighborhood?
- How would the people living in the area be affected by the closing and/or possible relocation of the Morton-Williams supermarket, both during construction and after the completion? Dependence on distant supermarkets is a hardship, especially for seniors.
- Can the local police precinct be expected to provide adequate police coverage for an expanded population? The 6<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct has told us many times that they are over-burdened with tourism, nightlife, and protection issues. This expansion will have a profound effect not only on the 6<sup>th</sup>, but on the immediately adjacent 1<sup>st</sup> Precinct.
- Fire hazards are greatly increased because of apparent removal of the two-way roads crossing the northern superblock and loss of access to the existing fire lanes there, among other reasons. To what extent will NYU study the FDNY's ability to operate during and after construction? In particular:
  - a. How would fire trucks get to all the existing apartments (in particular the buildings in the northern superblock given the landscaping around the two proposed "boomerang buildings" and taking of the green strip that is currently the LMNOP play area).
  - b. How would access to buildings for ambulance and emergency responders be affected by construction?
- How would access to buildings for ambulance and emergency responders be affected by automobile traffic? How would this affect ambulance response time? Certainly, the increased truck traffic for deliveries and moving in and out and increased refuse collection trucks will be a safety hazard for both bikers and pedestrians; mitigation measures must be outlined and discussed.

## 18. NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

*NYU's Draft Scope does not go into detail on Neighborhood Character and essentially states that it will be studied in light of other aspects of the EIS. That is insufficient given the unique character of the neighborhood, which has been created by the people who came here to be part of an avant-garde lifestyle fostering diversity and tolerance. Greenwich Village is nothing without its character.*

*If you asked people around the world to name a place that epitomized the idea of Neighborhood Character, a high percentage would name Greenwich Village and SoHo, not just because of the historic buildings, but also because of the energy created by the people who lived - and live - here. The Study needs to define this quality, identify its sources and its lifeblood, and study how proposed project Plan elements such as freshman housing, hotel and classrooms may directly and indirectly change the qualities that made the Village and SoHo famous; the qualities that still make them among the major reasons why people visit New York*

*This creative character – the fabric of Greenwich Village – still exists in small restaurants, cafes, theaters, music clubs and neighborhood stores, but is threatened to change beyond recognition by the*

*influx of students and faculty displacing artists, musicians and other established residents, retail serving a university rather than a community, and reduction in the open space that helps define the area as a Village.*

Some specific areas of investigation that CB2 requests include:

- Study and report on the impact of changing the zoning of a quiet residential area to higher-density residential plus commercial.
- Use interviews, surveys and focus groups with non-NYU-affiliated residents, especially long-term and arts community residents, to help define the area's character. Collaborate with knowledgeable residents, groups, and elected officials to develop appropriate survey parameters. For example:
  - Interview residents and business owners in the project area and nearby in NoHo, the South Village, and the Bleecker St. area, to assess their experience and concerns regarding NYU expansion with regard to impacts on neighborhood character
  - Interview residents on blocks such as East 12th Street where large NYU dormitories were recently built to evaluate the impact on the character of the immediate neighborhoods. Interviews should focus on residents who moved in years before the dorms were built and should include residents in different age groups
  - Interview residents on University Place between 8th Street and 12th Street where there is an apparent change of character caused by large numbers of students moving between dorms and classrooms
  - In the same areas, interview owners and customers of small stores and restaurants where the customer base is primarily the non-NYU community
- Report on the historic character of the area proposed for this project, including but not limited to:
  - Landmarks and buildings/complexes eligible for the State and National Register of Historic Places
  - Public art including the Picasso "Portrait of Sylvette" statue and the Vicki Khuzami "Bohemorama" print displayed on Morton Williams that features writers, musicians and artists that lived and worked in Greenwich Village because "Greenwich Village was the only place where they could live the lives they needed to live."
  - Locations where legendary people lived and worked, and sites of historic events
  - Books, movies, television shows and other media showing or mentioning the historic nature and unique character of Greenwich Village going back to the 1800s
  - Architectural history of Le Corbusier's Tower-in-the-Park paradigm and his modernist influence on both the University Village and Washington Square Village complexes (including their interplay – one somber and brutalist and the other featuring colored bricks and water towers typical of the modernist movement, etc) since I.M. Pei was influenced by and Paul Lester Weiner was a partner of Le Corbusier before designing Washington Square Village.
  - The history of Hideo Sasaki, chairman of the department of Landscape Architecture of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and the garden he created as a pioneering example of rooftop planting above the Washington Square Village garage
  - Visitors/tourists coming to Greenwich Village annually, both national and international
  - Small "mom-and-pop" businesses, galleries and venues throughout the area
  - Retail that serves residential needs changing to that which is more suited to student population

- Study and report on the effect of additional NYU structures, housing, students and personnel in this historic area on:
  - Existing and prospective non-NYU residents on and near the project blocks
  - Balance of non-university residential and retail to NYU residential, offices, gym, retail, hotel and dormitory in the project area and adjacent buildings
  - Shift from true residential “Village” to university “campus”
  - Population demographic, density and character changes when the dorm and hotel are in use and daytime employees are present
  - Change in population as NYU students seeking off-campus housing displace existing residents and as long-time residents move rather than being in the middle of NYU students 24/7
  - Quiet enjoyment of the neighborhood by existing residents - to be studied on weekdays during class changeovers, on weekends, and on evenings/nights
  - Reduction of streetside public open space
  - Sunlight and air available to residents and visitors
  - Added stress due to crowded conditions and more buildings than appropriate in a medium-density residential neighborhood
  - Effect of loss of mature trees and plants, and publicly accessible tree-filled walkways
  - Loss of birds and their prevalent song as their existing habitat is cut down and/or shadowed into inability to thrive, glass-clad buildings cause birdstrike deaths, ongoing construction effects, and the loss of open and green areas in which the wide variety of birds – including many songbird species – currently feed
  - Loss of independence and quality of life for the area’s many elderly residents due to the plan’s moving the supermarket farther than they can reach without assistance, having a large student population hurrying to and between classes and not always giving mobility-challenged people adequate berth, and taking away streetside gathering places.
  - Change in character due to loss of independent “mom-and-pop” shops, bookstores, galleries, music venues and small cafés that cater to adults and families, and other elements that together make up the charm of Greenwich Village
  - Reduction in property values causing vacancies and unsellable apartments both during and after construction, creating a “ghost-town” effect
  - Reduction in perceived value of the neighborhood as added retail creates long-term vacant storefronts or undesirable businesses
  - Loss of the character of neighborhood treasures such as Washington Square Park as students displace resident and visitor use
  - Loss of Le Corbusier tower-in-the-park modernist aesthetic of University Village and Washington Square Village by putting additional buildings on the “park” portion between and adjacent to the carefully planned existing structures

## 19. CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

*During the recent real estate expansion, Community Board 2 has gained significant experience in construction impacts. In such a dense residential area, construction projects can and have created noise, dirt, vermin and other challenges for residents and businesses. In order to address these kinds of issues the Board formed the Construction Committee. Based on our extensive expertise CB2 asks that NYU include plans to reduce or eliminate these problems.*

- Please provide a detailed plan of the methods that will be used to achieve LEED Silver status.

- If the findings of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) require further testing and / or remediation, please provide the Board with complete information on any required protocols and the methods of implementing them during construction.
- Please provide a complete plan for construction monitoring and testing systems.
- Please provide complete details of the construction-phasing plan and it's impacts.
- Please provide a Plan to implement the requirements for protecting landmarked structures during construction.
- Please provide the approved Stage 1A Archaeological Assessment that will be implemented during construction.
- Please provide details of the proposed foundation systems including the methods of installation and a site preparation and excavation plan.
- Please provide a detailed construction site plan that includes crane locations, construction elevator locations, material storage, contractor entry points, contractor parking, garbage removal, and temporary street and sidewalk closings.
- CB2 notes that there have been serious impacts on other NYU projects in the area from dewatering and the noise it creates. Please provide complete details for dewatering including a noise mitigation plan.
- The Proposed Action states the need for “**New York City Department of Transportation revocable consent for utility lines beneath City streets.**” CB2 notes that the mechanical systems for the new construction will require connection to the NYU central co-gen plant. CB2 has experienced significant problems with the simultaneous installation of these systems in conjunction with construction and related street closings. Please provide a complete plan for the installation of these systems. Also include plans for any work necessary to expand the capacity of the co-gen plant.
- Please provide a plan for keeping a supermarket in continuous operation during construction.
- Please provide the Board with a detailed vermin abatement plan.
- Please provide a plan for the protection of the open space strips, interior gardens, and existing trees during construction.
- The proposed action notes that there will be excavation under the Friends of LaGuardia Park. Please provide a plan for preserving the existing trees and vegetation at this location
- Community Board 2 has experienced significant noise complaints from construction projects in our district. Please provide a Construction Noise mitigation Plan.
- Please provide a plan for Public Notification and Community Outreach during construction.

## V. ALTERNATIVES

*There are many possible alternatives that allow a significant amount of development in the proposed study area but with less impact on residents, businesses and the character of the area. Please provide information and response on the following:*

### **The No-Action Alternative**

- The “No Action Alternative” should be a “Reasonable Worst Case Scenario.” Please provide a detailed description of the maximum “AS OF RIGHT” build out (including development allowed by Special Permit), the options the current zoning allows, and the anticipated impacts.
- The “No Action Alternative” in the Commercial Overlay District should also include the maximum “AS OF RIGHT” build out. NYU has noted the potential for additional construction in this area.

### **Main Alternatives To Full Plan**

- As reasonable alternative for the proposed C1-7 District, please provide a comparative analysis for a district that retains the current R7-2 zoning district and uses Commercial Overlay Districts as needed rather than a blanket commercial rezoning for the entire area. The North and South Superblocks already have over 76,000 sq ft of “as of right” commercial zoning available (proposed plan calls for only 55,000 sq ft of commercial development).
- Provide a reasonable alternative to the complete blanket commercial overlay rezoning in the COA, including an analysis detailing which blocks would be slated for commercial development and which would not be, in addition to the present existing grandfathered commercial areas totaling nearly 40,000 sq ft.
- As reasonable alternative for the proposed Demapping and City disposition of portions of City streets, please provide an analysis of the proposed project without using these areas in any way. This should include an analysis of the practicality of using space under the “green strips” in question where trees and shrubs have already taken deep root, and an alternative that would not involve removal of the existing trees, plantings, equipment, design or uses of these strips.
- As reasonable alternative for the proposed actions please provide a plan to retain the current zoning and city-owned property and relocate the proposed new buildings in other areas of the city such as Community Board 1, which has expressed strong interest in such a proposal. Invitations and options to build in the Financial District where land and existing zoning would accommodate present and future expansion to and beyond 2031, and better serve NYU and the City, should be investigated. (See Appendix D for list of potential sites, and also investigate empty lots available and/or working with other developers seeking Community Facility bonuses that NYU may be able to utilize.)
- As a reasonable alternative for the proposed Hotel, use excess hotel space in CB2 as there are many new hotels in the Board area, or other nearby Community Boards.

### **Additional Alternatives to All or Parts of Full Proposed Plan**

- As a reasonable alternative for the proposed Temporary Gym on the North Superblock, study the possibility of arranging discounted services at local physical fitness facilities and use of

neighboring Institutions' field houses, athletic facilities and/or gymnasium space in addition to NYU's existing Palladium athletic facility.

- Provide a reasonable alternative for the active recreational open space needed for a potential increase of some 2000 college-age young adults that is not provided for in the current plan. The current plan assumes that existing community based (non-university) active open spaces will be used, as no additional space is provided (active in this case is being defined as Frisbee, touch football, green fields as opposed to passive space -- benches gardens, paths, etc). Therefore, please provide a reasonable alternative to the actual building proposals for the Superblocks that could accommodate this campus environment.
- Provide an alternative that does not involve any building encroachment beyond the current streetwall of the superblocks.
- Provide an alternative with a significant reduction in the number of proposed dorm beds, hotel rooms, faculty housing and/or other added residential.
- Provide an alternative that requires less square footage overall, possibly resulting in fewer new NYU buildings, and results in significantly lower added density.
- Provide an alternative that does not change the zoning or add more commercial spaces to the COA.
- Provide an alternative that retains 14 and 15 Washington Place as residential buildings.
- Study the level of different potential land lease price points on the residents of 505 LaGuardia Place to determine a level that would not result in displacement of existing residents or undue financial hardship.
- Study the potential for using online learning to reduce space needs. According to the United States Distance Learning Association, "Nearly 30% of higher education students now take at least one course online. The overall finding of the U.S. Dept. of Education meta-analysis is that classes with online learning (whether taught completely online or blended), on average, produce stronger student learning outcomes than do classes with solely face-to-face instruction." They also report that, "More than sixty (60%) of college courses in 2020 will be taught online."
- As a reasonable alternative for a zoning change on the North Superblock, consider requesting a modification of the tax map for the Retail Strip on the North Superblock to include the grass area immediately behind it, and report on how much development that would allow without rezoning or changing the rest of the block's zoning. In this alternative, CB2 suggests that consideration be made to keep the additional built structure low so as to preserve the light, air and sightlines of the existing residences in Washington Square Village.
- As a reasonable alternative for a zoning change on the South Superblock, consider requesting a modification of the tax map to create a separate lot for what is now the Coles gymnasium building, and building to no higher than 23' from midblock north between Houston and Bleecker Street as currently exists, and higher but no higher than the adjacent University Village towers from midblock south.