



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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Delores Rubin
Chair

Jesse Bodine
District Manager

January 26, 2016

Maria Torres-Springer
President
New York City Economic Development Corporation
110 William Street
New York, NY 10038

Vicki Been
Commissioner
Department of Housing Preservation & Development
100 Gold Street 10038

**Re: Covenant House – Hunter College Site
Block 1050, Lots 1, 6, 13
Request for Proposal (RFP)**

Dear Ms. Torres-Springer and Commissioner Been:

At the Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) Executive Committee meeting on January 25, 2016, members discussed the Covenant House – Hunter College Site Request for Proposal (RFP). MCB4 has been engaged with the City Administration, the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and Covenant House to ensure that the RFP considers the community's needs. By a vote of 14 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, the Executive Committee voted to request that the following two amendments, as well as the original letter (see enclosed), be included in the RFP¹.

- 1. Open space for Covenant House residents; and***
- 2. The entire Carnegie Library building, not just the facade, must be preserved***

The Development Site

The Development Site on block 1050 is located between West 40th and 41st, Tenth and Dyer Avenues, and comprises the following sites:

- Covenant House, along 10th Avenue between West 40th and 41st Streets (including the former Carnegie Library on West 40th Street and adjacent to Covenant House)

¹ See Appendix A: CHKLU Letter to EDC and HPD re Covenant House – Hunter College RFP

- Former Hunter College Voorhees Campus in the mid-block along West 41st Street

All the above mentioned properties on the Site are owned by different entities and have been present on the block for extended periods of time. Covenant House first began operating out of the site in 1976 and continues to help homeless youth with shelter, social services, opportunities for schooling, and training for future employment. Part of the Covenant House site is the former West 40th Street Carnegie Library, which is now used by Covenant House as a health clinic and gym. The Hunter College Voorhees Campus Annex was vacated in 2014 and remains vacant. Ownership of the building has been reverted to the City of New York.

Community Requests for the RFP

Our July 2015 letter to you outlined the following community parameters for the RFP. All of these requests are the same, although we would like to amend the following items:

Residential Housing

- Original requests remain the same
- Additional Request:
Covenant House Open Space Parameters should include an open space for the Covenant House residents while ensuring full frontage to create the maximum zoning footprint for an affordable housing building on West 41st Street.

Possible open space options could include:

- A two story atrium along a portion of West 41st Street, or
- An outdoor patio encompassing the second floor rear yards of both the Covenant House and the Affordable Housing Building on West 41st Street

MTA Number 7 Line and future West 41st Street Station ventilation building easement

- Original requests remain the same

West 40th Street Carnegie Library Building

- Original requests remain the same
- Request Clarification:
The entire building, not just the façade, should be preserved

Port Authority

- Given that the Port Authority is no longer part of the RFP, those requests should not be considered.

Further Conditions

- Original requests remain the same

Conclusion

The Board believes in the importance of preserving our neighborhood's historic assets and ensuring that new development brings along with it open space for residents. For this reason we again urge that that these two items be included in the RFP for the Covenant House - Hunter College Site.

MCB4 thanks the City Administration, EDC, and HPD, and Covenant House for working with our district to develop the parameters for the RFP. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the Community Requests for RFP are given serious and thoughtful consideration in the evaluation of RFP responses.

This letter is subject to ratification by the full board at its February 3rd meeting.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
MCB4 Chair



Jean-Daniel Noland, Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

Enclosure

cc: Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, New York State Senate
Hon. Corey Johnson, City Council
Hon. Helen Rosenthal, City Council