



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4**

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**J. LEE COMPTON**  
Chair

**ANTHONY M. BORELLI**  
District Manager

December 16, 2005

Amanda M. Burden, A.I.C.P.  
Director  
New York City Department of City Planning  
22 Reade Street  
New York, New York 10007

**Re: 636 Eleventh Avenue**

Dear Ms. Burden:

Representatives of The Hakimian Organization made a preliminary presentation to this Board's Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee at its meeting on November 9, 2005 concerning its development plans for the building at 636 Eleventh Avenue, between 46<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Streets.<sup>1</sup> The site consists of an 11-story loft building occupying the entire Eleventh Avenue blockfront, and smaller adjacent buildings on 46<sup>th</sup> Street and 47<sup>th</sup> Street.

The owner proposes converting the Eleventh Avenue building and the 46<sup>th</sup> Street building to residential use, and constructing a new 7 story residential building on 47<sup>th</sup> Street. The entire complex would be accessible from the main entrance on Eleventh Avenue and from entrances in the 46<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Street buildings. An accessory parking garage with approximately 150 spaces would be constructed between the 46<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Street buildings, with entrances and exists on both streets. The Eleventh Avenue building would include ground floor commercial uses, including a health club, and perhaps a small tenant common space on the roof. Its façade would be retained and restored.

Mr. Hakimian has expressed a commitment to a conversion that will produce residential units that are affordable to moderate and middle income residents. The current proposal would locate all of the affordable units in the new building on 47<sup>th</sup> Street, with total floor area representing 10% of the floor area of the entire project.

The site is currently zoned M1-5. The balance of the block to the east consists primarily of residential uses in an R-8 zoning district, with an FAR of 4.2. Areas to the north in the Clinton

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<sup>1</sup> As you know, this building underwent extensive (but incomplete) renovation as a telecommunications center for Global Crossing followed by a misguided ownership situation and marketing effort before it was acquired by The Hakimian Organization in May 2005.

Urban Renewal Area have recently been rezoned to R-8A. The eastern side of Eleventh Avenue between 42<sup>nd</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> Streets, through both public and private action, is the subject of several other residential proposals. This is a trend that we support. Indeed, this Board's Statement of District Needs for Fiscal Year 2007 includes an outline of a proposed rezoning of this area to create a mid-rise residential corridor along both sides of Eleventh Avenue and preserve industrial uses west of that corridor. We are pleased that the Department has begun to work on a Zoning Framework along the same lines. The proposed Hakimian project will be an important first step toward redevelopment of the Eleventh Avenue corridor in a manner consistent with the community's priorities, including maintaining the avenue's existing scale and character.

We are therefore pleased to write in support of the proposed development plans, subject to the following requests:

- The site should be rezoned to R8A with a C1-5 commercial overlay along Eleventh Avenue.
- The Special Clinton District Preservation boundary should be extended west to 100 feet east of Eleventh Avenue.
- Parking should be accessory only and capacity should be limited to 20% of the residential units and one space per 4,000 square feet of commercial use, which is the maximum currently allowed for developments south of 60<sup>th</sup> Street. The parking garage should require a special permit pursuant to Section 96-11 of the Special Clinton District provision of the Zoning Resolution.
- The cornice on the Eleventh Avenue building should be restored, and the façade of the existing 47<sup>th</sup> Street building, which is consistent with the façade of the Eleventh Avenue building.
- Affordable units should be:
  - Distributed throughout the complex, and not isolated in the 47<sup>th</sup> Street building,
  - Permanently affordable to both moderate and middle income residents, and a restrictive declaration should be placed on the property to ensure continuing compliance,
  - The unit distribution should be 10% 3-bedroom units, 50% 2-bedroom units, 30% 1-bedroom units, and 10% studios, and
  - Significantly more than the 10% of the development's total floor area.

It is this Board's policy that 30% of all units in all new residential developments be affordable to a range of low, moderate and middle income households. We recognize that this is not new construction and that conversion of the Eleventh Avenue building presents some unique financial challenges due to the building condition created by the unfinished Global Crossing renovation. Further, we understand that this corridor is an emerging area for residential development. Lastly, the developer is not seeking to increase the site's existing floor area. Nonetheless we believe that the project can accommodate a larger number of affordable units without compromising the owner's legitimate financial requirements, and we will expect to work with the owner through the development process to maximize the number of affordable units in the project.

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We are pleased that this development seems to be moving forward, at last, and we look forward to working with DCP and the owner to achieve a redevelopment of this property that preserves the Eleventh Avenue building without expanding it, and that brings more affordable housing to Community District 4.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Anna Hayes Levin  
Co-Chair  
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee



Simone Sindin  
Co-Chair  
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

Cc: Local elected officials  
Ben Hakimian, The Hakimian Organization  
Paul Selver & Jeremiah Candreva, Kramer Levin