



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JOHN WEIS
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

July 21, 2010

Commissioner Rafael E. Cestero
NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development
100 Gold Street
New York, NY 10038

**Re: 530 West 53rd Street (portion of Clinton Urban Renewal Area Site 7)
Proposed Moderate and Middle Income Housing
Clinton Housing Development Company**

Dear Commissioner Cestero:

Manhattan Community Board No. 4 (CB4) writes to express its continued conceptual support for the development of a portion of Site 7, known as 530 West 53rd Street, of the Clinton Urban Renewal Area (CURA) by Clinton Housing Development Co. (CHDC) as a mixed-use, affordable housing development project.

In 2006 and again in 2007, a joint proposal by CHDC and Clinton Housing Association (CHA) to develop Site 7 on the Clinton Urban Renewal Area (CURA) was presented to the Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee (C/HKLU). The proposed project consisted of two separate, permanently affordable buildings on a portion of the CURA Site 7, including a 100 unit mixed-use affordable project fronting on West 53rd Street to be developed by CHDC, with a 100 unit residential building fronting on West 52nd Street to be developed by CHA. Both buildings would be permanently affordable to those of moderate and middle incomes. CB4's conceptual support of this project was, in part, the subject of our April 11, 2006 and March 9, 2007 letters to you, attached hereto for your reference.

At the July 14, 2010 C/HKLU meeting, CHDC limited its presentation to its portion of the development site at 530 West 53rd Street. It is our understanding that the CHA portion of the site will proceed separately with project certification anticipated in September 2010. While CHDC presented minor changes to the proposed project design and phasing, the most significant change is that CHDC now seeks to include its portion of the development site in either the planned ULURP for the rezoning of Eleventh Avenue or to have its site rezoned as a Follow-Up Corrective Action (FUCA) to the Eleventh Avenue Rezoning proposal. As you may be aware, CB4 is a co-applicant, together with the Department of City Planning, on the Eleventh Avenue Rezoning ULURP application.

CHANGES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Most notably, CHDC's design for 530 West 53rd Street now comprises two buildings that will be constructed in two phases, instead of the one large building as was originally proposed.

The site is located along 250 feet of West 53rd Street in the mid-block between 10th and 11th Avenues. CHDC is now proposing to build two 9-story buildings, with street frontages of 125 feet and 100 feet respectively and both at a depth of 100 feet. Each building will rise to 95 feet in height and together encompass 100 residential units of **permanent affordable housing**. A community garden will be located on the western edge of the site on West 53rd Street, along the remaining 25 feet of street frontage.

The Phase I Building will consist of 46 units and will contain space for the relocation of CURA commercial tenant Cybert Tire, both at- and below-grade. The Phase II Building will consist of 54 units and will include commercial relocation space for LeNoble Lumber below-grade, at-grade, and on the second floor. The buildings will contain a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units for moderate and middle income residents earning between 80% and 165% of Area Median Income (AMI). This project will include approximately 125,556 square feet of development.

Preliminary plans include on-site tenant amenities not limited to open space, a courtyard area between the two buildings, community rooms and laundry rooms. An apartment for the superintendent will be located on-site. The lot currently occupied by 548 West 53rd Street, adjacent to the School and the Flats project, will be combined with the planned community garden at 550 West 53rd Street, doubling its size and creating a 5,000 square foot garden.

ZONING AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Site 7 is currently zoned M1-5 and is not included in the scope of the proposed Eleventh Avenue Rezoning. The current rezoning plan, which creates a corridor of R8A along the eastern portion of Eleventh Avenue, ends just west of the development site. CHDC would like to see its proposed development site, together with the entire Site 7, added to the proposed ULURP application so that it too is rezoned as R8A. The rezoning of Site 7 to R8A would permit development at a FAR of 5.4, bonusable to 7.2, which would allow the projects to proceed as planned and would facilitate the creation of 200 units of permanent moderate and middle income housing. Including Site 7 in the Eleventh Avenue rezoning would eliminate the added delay and costs associated with commencing a subsequent rezoning action.

The project, if able to proceed, would include several bands of income affordability serving moderate and middle income residents who earn between 80% and 165% Area Media Income (AMI) (\$43,000 to \$88,750 for a single person; \$61,450 to \$126,700 for a family of four).

The buildings will be developed pursuant to the City of New York's New Housing Opportunities Program (New HOP) or another similar program, such as the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) new Middle Income Program.

PROPOSED BUILDING OWNER

CHDC¹ is a non-profit housing organization that has been active in the area with recent projects such as the Flats/Old School and 501-505 West 51st Street. CHDC has developed good working relationships with the Board, and has demonstrated a commitment to working with the community in developing their plans. We would be pleased to work with them on this project.

If the project moves forward, UDAAP and ULURP applications will be required, with ample opportunity for public consideration of the proposal in greater detail.

At this point, we support the required zoning text and map amendments necessary to realize this project, and encourage HPD to begin discussions with CHDC concerning same.

Sincerely,



John Weis, Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4



Elisa Gerontianos, Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee



Sarah Desmond, Co-Chair
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

cc: B. De La Torre- HPD's Assistant Commissioner of Planning
Meilan Chiu- HPD's Director of Manhattan Planning
NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn
NYC Council Member Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
NYS Senator Thomas Duane
NYS Assemblyman Richard Gottfried

¹ Joe Restuccia, Executive Director of CHDC, is also a member of the Board and of its Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee. His interest has been disclosed, and he is not entitled to vote on any matter concerning this proposal that may come before the Board or the Committee, including approval of this letter.