



**Department of  
Housing Preservation  
& Development**

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Office of Development  
Special Needs Housing  
100 Gold Street  
New York, N.Y. 10038

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Commissioner

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Assistant Commissioner

June 10, 2016

Manhattan Community Board 7  
Attn: Page Crowley, Richard Asche, & Elizabeth Caputo  
250 West 87<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10024

Re: West 108<sup>th</sup> Street Parking Garages

Dear Ms. Cowley, Mr. Asche, and Ms. Caputo:

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Community Board in March. HPD and WSFSSH have spent the past several months analyzing the alternatives proposed in the meeting and hope to present our results at the upcoming meeting. In advance of your June meeting, this letter addresses the concerns raised in your letter dated April 7, 2016. HPD appreciates your feedback and we are confident that we can work together to address neighborhood concerns and create a project that will be an asset to the community.

**Desire for a Comprehensive Approach**

As with each of our projects, environmental review is required prior to beginning the ULURP process. The City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process for the 108<sup>th</sup> St project will begin as soon as there is general consensus as to the project details (land use, number of units, population, building height, etc.). We thank the Community Board for leading a robust discussion about this project. We hope that when we return on June 15<sup>th</sup>, we can address the preponderance of concerns and agree upon a path to move forward.

**Parking**

In response to Community Board requests, WSFSSH hired Nelson/Nygaard to conduct a more extensive survey of the use of parking spaces in the defined area. The goal of the study is to collect data on garage operations, occupancy levels, parking availability, and feasibility costs of a subterranean garage. The parking study will be finalized in mid-June and shared with Community Board 7 at the June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The preliminary conclusions are:

**Feasibility of Below Grade Parking On site:** Geotechnical borings identified the presence of rock from 5 feet to 16 feet below the current parking structures. This greatly impacts the cost of excavation for below-grade parking. Nelson/Nygaard is estimating the cost based on this additional information. In assessing the viability of a subterranean garage funded by the current garage operator, WSFSSH provided the current parking operator with all

information regarding the site and has requested the operator provide additional financing information about his proposal so we can conduct a further review. To date, we have not yet heard back, and so we plan to reach out to other parking operators to further assess viability of on-site, below-grade parking.

**Daytime parking availability:** Based on an occupancy survey of 23 garages in a 12-block radius (with a response rate of 59%), there is a midday vacancy on weekdays of approximately 578 spaces and midday vacancy on weekends of approximately 1,159 spaces. Even at 9pm on weekdays there were 116 vacant spaces in the surveyed garages.

**Local monthly parking availability:** Despite the substantial number of midday and weekend spaces available, Nelson/Nygaard was only able to confirm 145 spaces definitively offered for monthly parking.

**Feasibility of Below Grade Parking Under Adjacent Park:** WSFSSH reviewed this option with the Manhattan Borough Commissioner, William Castro. The Parks Department is reviewing the process for alienation of parkland and other constraints to this option. We have not ruled this out as a possibility, but we do not believe it is likely to be a feasible option.

### **Senior Housing Breakdown**

**Proposed West Building (Lots 5, 10, 13):** 193 Units + 110 Shelter Beds

- 78 affordable units 0+1+2+3 Bedrooms
  - Includes 10 senior units at 30% AMI
- 115 supportive housing units
- 110 shelter beds for homeless seniors

**Proposed East Building (Lot 26):** 75 units

- 75 affordable senior units

### **Senior Housing- Neighborhood Preference**

HPD hopes to provide HUD-funded Project Based Vouchers (Section 8) for all of the senior apartments in the East Building. HUD allows a geographic preference at the borough level as-of-right. For a lottery preference at the Community Board level, WSFSSH can apply to HUD for a waiver and it will be at HUD's discretion whether to allow a Community Board preference. However, as you are well aware, WSFSSH has deep roots in Community Board 7 and will affirmatively market the lottery within the Community Board.

### **Central Park Ambulance Unit (CPMU)**

HPD and WSFSSH are working to secure an alternate location for the CPMU.

**Fair Share Distribution of Social Services**

HPD works to create affordable and supportive housing throughout NYC. The Upper West Side has a long history of inclusivity and HPD is grateful to the Community Board for helping to foster such community-mindedness. Research has long proven that Supportive Housing is an asset to neighborhoods, and HPD and WSFSSH will work very hard to create a project that is an asset to the Upper West Side.

**Additional Questions**

**Environmental Review.** In 2015, a Phase 1 environmental report was conducted, which consists of a records search that lists the historic uses of the site and any documented spills or other hazardous materials. This report forms the basis for the Phase 2 investigation, which undertakes environmental testing on the site itself. WSSFSH is working with OER to obtain approval for the Phase 2 investigation which will be completed during the summer of 2016.

The City and State have a number of programs through which WSFSSH can obtain funding for remediation costs. Based on the preliminary environmental reviews, the costs of remediation are expected to be within normal range for a project of this scale.

**Project Financing.** The project's proposed financing will include HPD Supportive Housing Loan Program, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and Tax-Exempt Bonds. In addition, HPD expects that a portion of the Collegiate School funds will be used to help finance the 108<sup>th</sup> St project. At this time we expect somewhere between \$4-10m of Collegiate Funds may be used at this site.

Sincerely,



Jessica Katz  
Assistant Commissioner

Cc: Paul Freitag, Executive Director, WSFSSH