



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARDS 3, 7, 11

July 5, 2013

Hon. Michael R. Bloomberg  
Mayor of the City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

John B. Rhea  
Chairman  
New York City Housing Authority  
250 Broadway, 12th Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Hon. Shaun Donovan  
Secretary  
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 Seventh Street SW  
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Mayor Bloomberg, Chairman Rhea and Secretary Donovan:

Manhattan Community Boards 3, 7, and 11 write again to strongly urge a postponement of the release of the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) related to NYCHA's infill development plans for sites located within our communities. RFP's should not be released until all concerned parties have opportunities to thoroughly discuss and understand, with the support of professional technical assistance providers, such critical matters as the selection and orientation of the specific development sites; the environmental impacts of the loss of recreational and other open space; the specifics of the massing and design of new buildings; the structural impact that proximate development will have on existing buildings; and the impact of the proposed development on the infrastructure such as transit, schools, sanitation, police, fire and other essentials on which NYCHA, its immediate neighbors and the communities at large rely. Our Community Boards have sent numerous letters to you, including the enclosed resolutions duly adopted by our Boards in opposition to the current proposal and the manner in which it has been pursued. To date our communities have received no written communication from your offices that directly addresses our concerns.

Furthermore, letters from Community Boards and Tenants Associations expressing opposition to the infill plan have not been acknowledged and concerns have not been addressed. Whether or not formal votes have been taken by certain NYCHA tenants associations, who have yet to gain access to the support they need to respond to these proposals, is beside the point. Focusing on this side issue ignores the significant outpouring of concern from NYCHA residents and neighbors to the infill proposals and the opposition voiced by many of them in determined albeit less formal means.

New concerns relating to the potential for releasing toxic contaminants in the course of infill development have recently come to light that underscore the need for robust interactive engagement of affected communities and for research and careful deliberation before undertaking any such construction. Analysis of soil samples taken from several parking lots that are proposed for infill development, including a site at Park West Village as well as several sites at or near those proposed for NYCHA infill, revealed lead contamination above the generous standards permitted by federal guidelines. The New York State Department of Health recently ordered that a full Environmental Impact Statement be prepared relating to the Park West Village site. NYCHA tenants, neighbors and their communities should be afforded no less protection.

For all the reasons stated above, we once again urge you to delay any infill RFP and allow for civil and respectful dialogue on a host of legitimate issues of community concern.

Sincerely,



Gigi Li  
Chair, CB3

Mark Diller  
Chair, CB7

Matthew S. Washington  
Chair, CB11

cc: Mirza Orriols, Deputy Regional Administrator HUD  
Hon. Nydia M. Velázquez, U.S. House of Representatives, 7th New York District  
Hon. Jerrold Nadler, U.S. House of Representatives, 10th New York District  
Hon. Carolyn B. Maloney, U.S. House of Representatives, 12th New York District  
Hon. Charles B. Rangel, U.S. House of Representatives, 13th New York District  
Hon. Daniel L. Squadron, New York State Senate, 26th District  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate, 27th District  
Hon. Jose M. Serrano, New York State Senate, 29th District  
Hon. Bill Perkins, New York State Senate, 30th District  
Hon. Sheldon Silver, Speaker, New York State Assembly, 65th District  
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, New York State Assembly, 67th District  
Hon. Robert J. Rodriguez, New York State Assembly, 68th District  
Hon. Daniel J. O'Donnell, New York State Assembly, 69th District  
Hon. Keith L.T. Wright, New York State Assembly, 70th District  
Hon. Brian Kavanagh, New York State Assembly, 74th District  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Margaret Chin, New York City Council, 1st District  
Hon. Rosie Mendez, New York City Council, 2nd District  
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, New York City Council, 6th District  
Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council, 8th District  
Brian Honan, NYCHA Director of State & City Legislative Affairs



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 3

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Gigi Li, Board Chair

Susan Stetzer, District Manager

At its June 2013 monthly meeting, Community Board 3 Manhattan passed the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, Community Board 3 ("CB 3") possesses five of the developments in the current New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") Land Use Plan, known as the "Infill Plan," and its related Request For Proposal ("RFP"); and

**WHEREAS**, a super majority of these developments (4) oppose the Infill Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, CB3 has not received answers to questions about the in-fill plan that were sent to NYCHA two months in a row; and

**WHEREAS**, the Infill Plan and process are not considered viable due to the lack of a transparent public process; and

**WHEREAS**, because the RFP is not subject to a Uniform Land Use Review Procedure ("ULURP"), CB3 has asked to open up the RFP process to include meaningful community engagement and to slow down the timeline to allow for this engagement; and

**WHEREAS**, there is legislation in the NY State Legislature to require NYCHA properties to go through a ULURP process for the Infill Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, resolutions are pending in the New York City Council that call for stopping payments to the New York Police Department for services to NYCHA properties and halting the issuance of an RFP to allow for a more open process that engages the public; and

**WHEREAS**, the Manhattan Borough President has engaged in dialogue with the Bloomberg administration and proposed that NYCHA follow the City of New York's ULURP; so

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that Community Board 3 supports the NYS legislation that would require NYCHA land disposition to be subject to ULURP in the New York State Legislature; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Community Board 3 supports the City Council resolutions that calls for stopping payments to the NYPD for services to NYCHA properties and also halting the issuance of an RFP to allow for a more open process that engages the public and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Community Board 3 supports the Borough President's call for NYCHA to follow the ULURP; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that Community Board 3 opposes the current Infill Plan based on the lack of public process buy NYCHA as well as the absence of any response to Community Board 3's questions.

**RESOLUTION**

**Date: May 7, 2013**

**Committee of Origin: Housing**

**Re: NYCHA. Moratorium on the Release of the RFP for NYCHA's Infill Development Proposal at Frederick Douglass Houses.**

This resolution is based on the following facts:

- The New York City Housing Authority is proposing to lease land and transfer development rights (sometimes called "air rights") to private developers to permit the construction of approximately 735,000 square feet of new residential units on 3 sites located on the campus of the Douglass Houses.
- Of the new residential infill units, 80% are slated to be market-rate rentals, and 20% are to be permanently affordable under one of the existing inclusionary housing formulas and programs.
- NYCHA believes they are not obligated to undergo a formal review process such as New York City's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure.
- NYCHA's outreach efforts to Douglass Houses residents and neighbors have resulted to date in presentations that needed to be repeated because community members were excluded because the venue could not accommodate the number who turned out, and in general are characterized by confusion that reinforces residents' concerns, rumors and distrust.
- While NYCHA has twice unilaterally delayed the expected date of release of an RFP on this project, each time for a short period, the public outreach has been conducted at every turn with the looming imminent threat of the release of the RFP.
- To date, no aspect of the presentation or proposal relating to the NYCHA infill at the Douglass Houses has been modified, changed or re-thought as a result of feedback from Douglass Houses residents or neighbors.
- NYCHA's lack of transparency and stunningly rushed timeline have the effect of preventing tenant associations, public housing residents and neighbors, community members, Community Boards and Elected Officials from meaningfully engaging in a process that could have a positive effect upon the development proposal as it relates to Douglass Houses.
- No effort has been made by NYCHA to include Douglass Houses residents or community stakeholders in the RFP drafting process, nor has NYCHA shared preliminary versions of the RFP for comment prior to release.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Community Board 7/Manhattan calls for an immediate moratorium on the release of any RFP related to infill development at the Frederick Douglass Houses until a reasonable period after the completion of outreach to Douglass Houses residents and neighbors, the Community Board, our Elected Officials and other community stakeholders, conducted in an open and interactive manner without the threat or rush to complete such outreach and interaction before a looming deadline.

*Committee: 6-0-0-0. Non-Committee Board Members: 2-0-0-0.*

**RESOLUTION**

**Date: May 7, 2013**

**Committee of Origin: Housing**

**Re: NYCHA. Urging the current infill proposal for the Frederick Douglass Houses be abandoned and calling for a collaborative approach to finding new revenue sources for NYCHA.**

This resolution is based on the following facts:

- The New York City Housing Authority's operating budget has been chronically underfunded by various levels of government for more than a decade, with a current cumulative deficit estimated at more than \$750 million.
- The pernicious operating budget shortfall has occasioned the use of the allowable maximum of 20% of the capital reserves to be used to close operating budget shortfalls every year. The depletion of capital reserves in turn is expected to generate a capital shortfall of over \$170 million over the next 5 years.
- The operating and capital budget shortfalls present a significant threat to the continued viability of the Douglass Houses as affordable public housing, and NYCHA must find viable long-term solutions.
- To address these operating and capital budget shortfalls, NYCHA is proposing to lease land and contribute development rights (sometimes called "air rights") to private firms to permit the construction of approximately 735,000 square feet of new residential units on 3 sites located on the campus of the Frederick Douglass Houses, as well as 11 other sites on 8 other NYCHA campuses in Manhattan.
- The 3 new buildings proposed for Douglass Houses would be built upon existing parking lots located (a) on Manhattan Avenue between 101<sup>st</sup> -102<sup>nd</sup> Streets; (b) on West 104<sup>th</sup> Street near Amsterdam Avenue (adjacent to the International Youth Hostel); and (c) on West 100<sup>th</sup> Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues (adjacent to the NYPD and FDNY station houses).
- NYCHA's proposal includes its commitment not to eliminate parking for current Douglass Houses residents with parking permits. As a result, NYCHA plans to relocate the parking to be lost to the infill project through a combination of squeezing more parking spots out of other existing lots, and creating new parking lots on the Douglass Houses campus.
- Since NYCHA is also committing not to eliminate children's playgrounds on the Douglass Houses sites, the new parking lots will be created using open space that is currently used as green space and walkways between buildings and other facilities on the campus.
- The type of zoning employed at Douglass Houses and at other NYCHA campuses was intended to trade generous amounts of open space for additional height on the residential buildings. The loss of significant amounts of usable open space, particularly green space, is an irreversible removal of an already-scarce commodity, and contradicts the intended benefits of the zoning for Douglass Houses residents and neighbors.
- Douglass Houses residents and neighbors have consistently expressed concerns relating to NYCHA's outreach efforts relating to this proposal. Among other things, NYCHA has presented the infill proposal as an accomplished fact, has refused to entertain suggestions to submit its proposal to scrutiny under the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure or any other community-centric analysis, and has arranged presentations in venues that could not accommodate the residents and neighbors who turned out to hear the presentation, requiring it to be repeated to community members who were excluded the first time.
- NYCHA claims that the outreach and engagement requirements under Section 18 do not apply at this pre-RFP phase of the proposal. Accordingly, none of the community outreach conducted by NYCHA thus

Committee of Origin: Housing

Re: NYCHA. Urging the current infill proposal for the Frederick Douglass Houses be abandoned and calling for a collaborative approach to finding new revenue sources for NYCHA.

far should be eligible to be submitted to the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development as meeting these requirements.

- While NYCHA has twice unilaterally delayed the expected date of release of an RFP on this project, each time for a short period, its public outreach has been conducted at every turn with the looming imminent threat of the release of a request for proposal from developers.
- To date, no aspect of the presentation or proposal relating to the NYCHA infill at the Douglass Houses has been modified, changed or re-thought as a result of feedback from Douglass Houses residents or neighbors.
- The nearly-universal, intense negative reaction by Douglass Houses residents and neighbors to the presentations follows on years of poor maintenance, safety and other issues being left unresolved for extended periods of time or not being addressed altogether. Douglass Houses residents and neighbors have expressed concerns over the viability of the infill proposal, and the stewardship of the funds generated should it this proposal move forward.
- In the short term, the infill proposal would have a significant impact on Douglass Houses residents and their neighbors, including the disruption, noise, waste, traffic and construction vehicle congestion attending the construction of a tall residential tower, let alone the simultaneous construction of 3 such towers on two adjoining superblocks.
- In the longer term, the infill proposal will further tax a narrow subway entrance and other finite public transit resources, crowded public schools, waste removal and other local resources and amenities.
- PlaNYCHA, released in December 2011, referenced multiple revenue-generating possibilities that would have far less impact on the existing community. Some, such as low-rise commercial infill in or near existing Douglass Houses residential buildings, could both generate revenue and provide amenities and additional resources to Douglass Houses residents, neighbors and the greater community. Others, such as leasing roof rights for cell towers and other services, could also be examined for their revenue potential.
- No collaborative or inclusive effort to explore alternatives to the infill proposal has been attempted to date.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT Community Board 7/Manhattan calls on all levels of government to reject the infill proposal at Douglass Houses in its current form; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT CB7, recognizing the threat posed by operating and capital budget shortfalls to the Douglass Houses and the need for new revenue sources, calls on NYCHA to work collaboratively with entire community, with particular care in outreach and interaction with Douglass Houses residents, neighbors and members of the wider affected district, to find and develop new revenue sources to protect the Douglass Houses and other NYCHA public housing communities.

Committee: 6-0-0-0. Non-Committee Board Members: 2-0-0-0.

# COMMUNITY BOARD 7 Manhattan

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May 20, 2013

Hon. John B. Rhea  
Chairman  
New York City Housing Authority  
250 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Frederick Douglass Houses Infill Proposal**

Dear Chairman Rhea:

On behalf of Community Board 7/Manhattan and our Upper West Side community, I enclose two resolutions overwhelmingly adopted by our full Board.

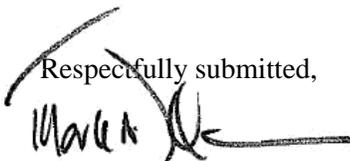
The first resolution calls for an immediate moratorium on the release of any RFP related to infill development at the Frederick Douglass Houses. As the resolution details, our Board and community are deeply troubled by the manner in which outreach has been conducted and the unilateral approach to the proposal that excludes the fruits of community responses and input.

The second resolution recognizes the catastrophic consequences of a decade's unpardonable funding cuts to NYCHA, but concludes for a variety of reasons, many of which would have been clearer if community engagement had been done with a focus on the needs and concerns of residents and neighbors, that the current proposal being discussed is not appropriate and should not be pursued. Given the sheer weight of unmet capital and operating budget needs, and the consequences of further inaction, we agree that new revenue sources must be pursued, but emphatically believe that the current proposal is not the right solution for the Douglass Houses residents, neighbors or the community at large.

While a moratorium and disapproval may seem inconsistent at first blush, they are not. The first resolution addresses the process needed for any proposal aimed at redressing the financial crisis facing NYCHA to be a success; the second observes that while the crisis is real, the current proposal is not the one to be pursued.

We commend these concerns to your attention and are ready to work with NYCHA to find alternative ways to preserve this vital and important asset to our community and our City.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Diller  
Chair, CB7



Nick Prigo and Louis Cholden-Brown  
Co-Chairs, CB7 Housing Committee

Copies: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, U.S. House of Representatives, 10<sup>th</sup> New York District  
Hon. Charles Rangel, U.S. House of Representatives, 13<sup>th</sup> New York District  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, New York State Assembly, 67<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Daniel J. O'Donnell, New York State Assembly, 69<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly, 75<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate, 27<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Jose M. Serrano, New York State Senate, 29<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Bill Perkins, New York State Senate, 30<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, New York State Senate, 31<sup>st</sup> District  
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, New York City Council, 6<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council, 8<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. Inez Dickens, New York City Council, 9<sup>th</sup> District



Matthew S. Washington  
**Chairman**

George Sarkissian  
**District Manager**

## COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
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April 29, 2013

State Senator Jose Serrano  
157 East 104 Street  
New York, NY 10029

State Senator Bill Perkins  
163 West 125 Street, Suite 912  
New York, NY 10027

Assemblyman Keith Wright  
163 West 125 Street, Suite 911  
New York, NY 10027

Assemblyman Robert Rodriguez  
55 East 115 Street  
New York, NY 10029

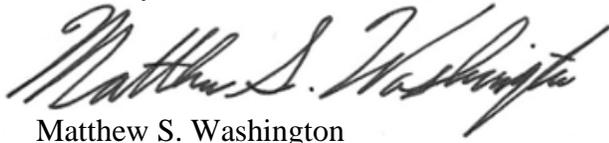
Dear Senator Serrano, Senator Perkins, Assemblyman Wright and Assemblyman Rodriguez,

The Executive Committee of Community Board 11 has been very concerned with the recent announcement by the New York City Housing Authority to lease land they currently own at several housing developments throughout Manhattan, including sites at Washington and Carver Houses in East Harlem. NYCHA is making available 742,000 square feet of development rights at Carver Houses, and another 850,000 square feet available at Washington Houses. Initial modeling that we produced for the two development sites at Washington Houses revealed potential buildings heights of 393 feet and 523 feet. NYCHA has also stated that they will only require developers to include 20% affordable housing, and have yet to indicate what percentage of the lease revenues will be reinvested back into the respective housing developments.

Many of these issues would typically be addressed through the City ULURP process, but as you are aware, NYCHA is not subject to ULURP review and are subsequently not accountable to many of the stakeholders that would likely raise these concerns, including our Community Board.

The NYCHA Real Property Public Review Act, which was recently introduced in the NY State Senate and Assembly, would require that any disposition of land or buildings by NYCHA be subject to ULURP, thereby providing substantive public review, which is not currently required. We ask that you consider supporting this proposed legislation, and we encourage you to persuade your colleagues to do the same to allow impacted to communities to have a formal role in reviewing and influencing these developments. These projects will likely have a lasting impact on our community, potentially exacerbating the negative effects of gentrification without making any specific commitments to meeting the capital needs of our existing local NYCHA housing developments. We believe this bill could provide our community the role it currently lacks in ensuring the proposed developments provide a more comprehensive set of benefits.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Washington  
Chairman  
Community Board 11

cc: Hon. Charles Rangel, United States Congress  
Hon. Carolyn Maloney, United States Congress  
Hon. Nydia M. Velasquez, United States Congress  
Hon. Dean Skelos, New York State Senate  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate  
Hon. Daniel L. Squadron, New York State Senate  
Hon. Sheldon Silver, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Brian Kavanaugh, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Daniel J. O'Donnell, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council  
Hon. Margaret Chin, New York City Council  
Hon. Rosie Mendez, New York City Council  
Mark N. Diller, Community Board 7 Manhattan  
Gigi Li, Community Board 3 Manhattan



Matthew S. Washington  
**Chairman**

George Sarkissian  
**District Manager**

## COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
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April 30, 2013

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

John B. Rhea, Chairman  
New York City Housing Authority  
250 Broadway, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Shaun Donovan, Secretary  
United States Department of Housing & Urban Development  
451 Seventh Street S.W.  
Washington, DC 20410

Representative Charles B. Rangel  
13th Congressional District  
163 W. 125th Street, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10027

Dear Mayor Bloomberg, Chairman Rhea, Secretary Donovan and Congressman Rangel:

Community Board 11 of Manhattan continues to oppose the current process for the pending release of the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) related to NYCHA's infill development plans in our community board and other communities impacted by this plan. The current process has only informed stakeholders of the plans to go forward, but needs to take the time to engage stakeholders in a more substantive conversation that discusses the needs of the individual communities and ultimately shapes the RFPs that are going to be released.

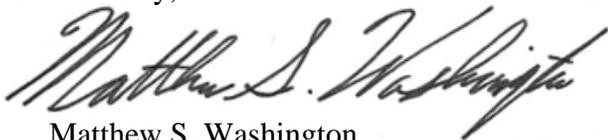
There are still many concerns and questions that stakeholders have which need to be addressed, especially when considering the potential loss of recreational/open space and community centers. There is still no complete understanding of how new developments will impact existing buildings, the amount of affordable housing required for the local community, how lease revenue will be reinvested, etc. Tenant associations have submitted several questions regarding many of these issues, which NYCHA should respond to before residents are expected to provide feedback.

It is critical for local stakeholders to play a role in how our communities are planned and developed. We request that NYCHA share the draft language of the RFP and allow tenant associations, community boards and elected officials the opportunity to comment before the RFP is released.

We would like to call to your attention our work with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development on the East 125<sup>th</sup> Street Development Project as an example of how developing a cooperative working relationship between government and community can diffuse a bitter community impasse. Over the course of several months EDC and other city agencies met with community stakeholders to develop detailed goals for an RFP. Community stakeholders were also provided an opportunity to review and comment on the draft language of the RFP before it was released.

We urge you to take the time to substantively include resident input in the design and development of any NYCHA infill development plan in order to avoid prolonged contentions and bitter battles.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Washington  
Chairman  
Community Board 11

cc:

Hon. Carolyn Maloney, United States Congress  
Hon. Nydia M. Velasquez, United States Congress  
Hon. Bill Perkins, New York State Senate  
Hon. Jose M. Serrano, New York State Senate  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate  
Hon. Daniel L. Squadron, New York State Senate  
Hon. Keith L.T. Wright, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Robert J. Rodriguez, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Sheldon Silver, New York State Assembly  
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Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council  
Hon. Margaret Chin, New York City Council  
Hon. Rosie Mendez, New York City Council  
Mirza Orriols, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development  
Mark N. Diller, Community Board 7 Manhattan  
Gigi Li, Community Board 3 Manhattan