



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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Dominic Pisciotta, Board Chair

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Community Board 3 supports the Third Avenue Corridor rezoning. At its Full Board meeting on June 22, 2010, Manhattan Community Board 3 recommended approval of the application by a unanimous vote of 35 in favor and 0 opposed, and 2 abstentions.

I would like to start off by saying that this zoning change would not be possible if it were not for the efforts of a number of people. The Manhattan Borough President provided Community Board 3 with a fellow who did the initial work on this plan. This kind of work that would not have been possible previously. Council Member Mendez also worked endlessly to see that this change would occur. Andrew Berman from the Greenwich Village Historical Preservation Society provided the board with invaluable guidance. And of course we would like to thank Commissioner Burden and Edith Hsu-Chen, Director of the Manhattan Borough Office.

This rezoning will change an existing C6-1 zoning district to a C6-2A contextual zoning district for 8 blocks generally bounded by East 13th Street (to the north); East 9th Street (to the south); Third Avenue (to the east); and the Fourth Avenue (to the west). The Board supports both the change to contextual zoning and the related application for a Zoning Text amendment to extend the Inclusionary Housing Program to the proposed area.

Community Board 3 first proposed a zoning change for this area with the Lower East Side rezoning. At that time, DCP was not ready to rezone the current area. The LES rezoning preserved contextual zoning of the neighborhood. This rezoning extends this contextual zoning and inclusionary housing to an extended area of the East Village.

The Community Board testified at the time of the LES rezoning that the office had been flooded with calls regarding the out-of-scale development of the neighborhood. Long-time residents and those who had recently moved here because of their attraction to the character of the community were shocked and extremely upset about the sudden overdevelopment of the neighborhood.

People had assumed that new buildings could not exceed the height of the surrounding buildings. Suddenly, they were piercing our skyline—and they were being built totally out of character with the historic nature of our tenement community. The Third Avenue Corridor in particular was invaded by dorms and hotels that changed both the physical aspect of the community as well as the nature of the community to a very upscale area. The height caps in this rezoning ends that and will bring stability and predictability back to the neighborhood. This rezoning, like the LES rezoning, responds to community concerns regarding contextual heights of the buildings.

One of the highest priority issues of our community is affordable housing. The inclusionary housing program included in this re-zoning provides incentive for developers to provide 20 percent permanently affordable lower-income housing within CB 3 or within a half mile of the site. Because of this key component, when development occurs, it will include homes for families, not just out-of-context dorms.

Community Board 3 began this process when it conducted a zoning analysis of the area with help from our Manhattan Borough President's planning fellow in 2007. Since then there have been many public meetings and public hearings to provide education for the community as well as input from the community. Of course there are residents that would prefer the proposal go further in zoning restrictions and more affordable housing, but the community board has not received any negative comments regarding the proposed changes. We believe these changes will help protect the character of the neighborhood both structurally and economically.

Community Board 3 is very appreciative that DCP has responded to community concerns to preserve contextual development and provide opportunities for affordable housing. This rezoning addresses two of the highest priorities of Community Board 3.