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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

October 25, 2019

Marisa Lago, Chair
NYC Department of City Planning
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, New York 10271

RE: Lenox Hill Hospital's Proposal for its Block between Park and Lexington Avenues, and 76th Street and 77th Street

Dear Chair Lago,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on October 23, 2019, the board **APPROVED** the following resolution by a vote of 36 in favor, 3 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1 not voting for cause.

WHEREAS Lenox Hill Hospital Northwell Health is proposing a series of zoning actions, consisting of: (i) rezoning the Development Site to a C2-8 (R10 equivalent) district; (ii) text amendments to: remove the western portion of the Development Site from the Special Park Improvement District; map a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area over the Development Site; allow the Development Site to be redeveloped as a large-scale community development; provide for modification, by special permit, of height and setback regulations for a large-scale community development; allow, by special permit, a floor area increase of 2.0 FAR, without an affordable housing component, for a project at least 70% of which would be community facility use; and allow, by special permit, a floor area increase up to a total of 15.0 FAR for a mixed-use project with a substantial community facility component and additional amenities; and (iii) special permits to permit the proposed project on the Development Site up to a total of 15.0 FAR, of which 77.6% would be comprised of 21st century state of the art hospital use.

WHEREAS this proposal, as presented, is a significant violation of the Zoning Resolution, and

WHEREAS the proposed Park Avenue and 76th Street apartment building will be 490 feet tall where the existing zoning height limit is 19 stories or 210 feet, whichever is less, and

WHEREAS the proposed Lexington Avenue hospital building will be 516 feet tall where the existing zoning height limit is 170 feet, and

WHEREAS the proposed mid-block portion of the hospital will be over 200 feet tall where the existing zoning height limit is 75 feet, and

WHEREAS Northwell Lenox Hill Hospital has applied for a rezoning of the block to C2-8, and

WHEREAS Northwell Lenox Hill Hospital is requesting enormous waivers of most of C2-8's provisions, and

WHEREAS the total FAR of the proposed buildings on the block would be approximately 15, and the maximum allowable FAR is approximately 7.5, and

WHEREAS the proposal is approximately double the allowable bulk and two-and-a-half to three times the allowable height on the block, and

WHEREAS the blocks between Park and Lexington Avenues in Community District 8 are currently appropriately zoned, accurately reflecting their scale and character, and

WHEREAS the current controls are necessary to protect the neighborhood's existing character and the quality of life of the residents, and

WHEREAS Northwell Lenox Hill Hospital proposes to sell the Park Avenue/76th Street site to a developer for the purpose of constructing luxury housing, and

WHEREAS the applicant claims that the proceeds of the sale of this site is necessary to provide needed funding for this project, and

WHEREAS information provided by the community group, Save Lenox Hill, suggested that Northwell was well positioned to fund this project without constructing the oversize, out of context residential building, and

WHEREAS the period of construction is projected to be approximately 10 years, and

WHEREAS there are significant concerns about construction debris, noise, and traffic, and

WHEREAS Northwell Lenox Hill Hospital is proposing to widen the steps of the subway entrance on the southwest corner of 77th Street and Lexington Avenue and install an elevator for subway access at this location, but does not, as yet, have a commitment from the MTA, and

WHEREAS there is serious concern as to whether or not the subway access plans are sufficient, and

WHEREAS the community has not been presented with an Environmental Impact Statement, and

WHEREAS there are significant concerns about shadows that will be cast by the tall buildings, and

WHEREAS there are no plans for garages or an evaluation of the impact of this development on traffic before, during, and after construction, and

WHEREAS the carve out in the Upper East Side Historic District, permitting Lenox Hill Hospital to be excluded from the Historic District, was predicated on the current height and configuration of the hospital complex and the fact that it is a hospital, and

WHEREAS the proposed 490 foot residential building on Park Avenue is an egregious affront to the Historic District, and

WHEREAS the architecture is inconsistent with the residential architecture on Park Avenue, and

WHEREAS the residential building is out of context, and

WHEREAS the project does not provide for affordable housing, and

WHEREAS completion of this project, as presented, would have a negative impact on the surrounding community, and

WHEREAS the Community Board is not in opposition to the modernization of Lenox Hill's medical facilities, and

WHEREAS the Community Board looks forward to working with Northwell Lenox Hill to amend these development plans to the mutual satisfaction of the hospital and the community, and

WHEREAS there were no plans presented about the Third Avenue site, but just a verbal explanation that it would be an out-patient cancer treatment center, medical offices, and an outpatient medical diagnostic and treatment center, rising no more than 210 feet, and

WHEREAS the community values the services of Lenox Hill Hospital and feels confident that its modernization needs could be met within the current zoning and without the negative impact of the current plan,

THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 strongly disapproves the plan, as presented, but looks forward to working with Northwell Lenox Hill Hospital to effect a design that complies with the existing zoning regulations, addresses community concerns, and satisfies the hospital modernization plan.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,


Alida Camp
Chair


Elizabeth Ashby and Elaine Walsh
Co-Chairs, Zoning & Development

cc: Honorable Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Carolyn Maloney, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District