

Alida Camp
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
www.cb8m.com - Website
info@cb8m.com - E-Mail

**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan**

December 18, 2020

Marisa Lago, Chair
City Planning Commission
120 Broadway, 31st Floor
New York, NY 10271

RE: New York Blood Center Rezoning

Dear Chair Lago,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on December 16, 2020, the board approved the following resolution by a vote of 38 in favor, 5 opposed, 2 abstentions and 1 not voting for cause:

WHEREAS the New York Blood Center has partnered with Longfellow Real Estate Partners and is proposing to construct a 334'-tall building on the site of the existing NYBC (Block 1441, Lot 40) which will provide, above the 5th floor, space for commercial tenants to use as research labs and medical offices, and

WHEREAS the Blood Center is requesting 5 zoning changes:

1. Rezone site from R8B district to a C2-7 district which allows a commercial laboratory use (USE GROUP 9) and to develop the site to 10 FAR (453,000 zoning square feet) with no height limit.
2. Rezone Second Avenue block frontages between 66-67 St. to a depth of 100' from C1-9 to a C2-8 to "legalize" an existing movie theater and to allow several other large-scale functions under USE GROUP 9 (Catering Hall, Wedding chapel, TV Studio, Gymnasium);
3. Zoning text amendment to Section 74-48 to allow, by special permit, an increase in commercial FAR in C2-7 districts for medical laboratories and associated offices, and modifications to the applicable supplementary use, bulk, and signage regulations.
4. Special permit pursuant to Section 74-48, as amended, to permit:
 - a. commercial laboratory and associated office space to be included in the project at more than the 2 FAR permitted in C2-7 districts pursuant to Section 33-122;
 - b. the commercial space to be located above the second floor of the building, which is not permitted by Zoning Resolution Section 32-421;
 - c. the commercial space to be located above the lesser of 30 feet or two stories, which is not permitted by Zoning Resolution Section 33-432;
5. Special permit pursuant to Section 74-48, as amended, to permit:

- a. modifications of the height and setback regulations of Section 33-432, which will allow the building to encroach on the initial setback distance and the sky exposure plane, which is necessary to accommodate the large floorplates required for modern, efficient laboratory uses;
- b. modifications of the rear yard equivalent regulations of Section 33-383, which will allow the Proposed Development to occupy the same footprint as the existing building on its lower floors, and will allow the upper portion of the building to be shifted away from the park and away from the neighboring building; and
- c. a sign to be located at the top of the building's base, in excess of the surface area permitted for illuminated signs pursuant to Section 32-642, the total surface area permitted for all signs pursuant to Section 32-641 and 32-643, and the maximum height of signs allowed by Section 32-655, and

WHEREAS the mid-blocks in Community District 8 are predominately and appropriately zoned R8B, and

WHEREAS R8B zoning protects the scale and character of the mid-blocks, and

WHEREAS R8B zoning permits residential and community facility uses only with height limit of 75', and

WHEREAS the livability of the community and the quality of life of the residents depend upon the R8B height and use regulations, and

WHEREAS the Blood Center has acknowledged that it can satisfy its mission and space needs within the R8B zoning (five floors and 75' high), and

WHEREAS the proposal may result in significant adverse impacts related to land use, zoning, socioeconomic conditions, open space, transportation, shadows, hazardous materials, water and sewer infrastructure, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, noise, public health, neighborhood character:

1. The proposal amounts to "spot zoning."
2. The commercial laboratory component is inappropriate for the residential area.
3. The proposed building would have a negative impact on the students attending Julia Richman Education Complex (JREC),
4. The proposed building would create overwhelming demands upon local services
5. Traffic in the area is already seriously congested and will likely be exacerbated
6. The 334-foot commercial tower would generate a large amount of pedestrian traffic in the already overcrowded local sidewalks.
7. The proposed building would cast extensive shadows over Saint Catherine's Park and neighboring buildings.
8. The commercial entity and the research labs and associated office space will have significant adverse effect on the environmental air quality.

WHEREAS the proposed zoning changes, if approved, would set a dangerous precedent, putting all the Upper East Side mid-blocks at risk, and

WHEREAS Community Board 8 has approved and is working with DCP towards limiting building height on First, Second, Third, and York Avenues to 210', and this proposal significantly exceeds that on a mid-block lot, and

WHEREAS the representative of the Julia Richman Education Complex shared the institution's alarm and opposition to the proposal, and

WHEREAS the shadows on the complex would put the building in darkness and have a negative impact on student learning, and

WHEREAS there is widespread fear and opposition in the community, as evidenced by the hundreds of residents attending the committee meetings to voice their concerns, and

WHEREAS Community Board 8 has disapproved similar zoning change requests from Northwell/Lenox Hill Hospital,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan opposes the request for all of the zoning changes as outlined in our resolution and as set forth by the New York Blood Center.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Alida Camp

Alida Camp
Chair

Elizabeth Ashby and Elaine Walsh

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 Jose M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Robert Rodriguez, NYS Assembly Member, 68th Assembly District
Honorable Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District