

Russell Squire  
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**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
**Zoning and Development Committee**  
*Tuesday, February 28, 2023 - 6:30 PM*  
*Conducted remotely on Zoom*

**Minutes**

**Board Members Present:** Mohit Agrawal, Elizabeth Ashby, Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Anthony Cohn, Lindsey Cormack, Rebecca Dangoor, Felice Farber, Edward Hartzog, Craig Lader, John McClement, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Margaret Price, Elizabeth Rose, Judy Schneider, Russell Squire, Marco Tamayo, Adam Wald, Shari Weiner.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

**Item 1: Informational presentation by Northwell Health to share revised plans to renovate and redevelop Lenox Hill Hospital, which is located between E. 76 and E. 77th Streets and Park and Lexington Avenues.**

Representatives of Northwell Health presented their revised plans to renovate and redevelop Lenox Hill Hospital, located between East 76th and East 77th Streets and Park and Lexington Avenues.

During their presentation, representatives from Lenox Hill Hospital stressed their interest in providing the highest quality clinical care, with their proposal addressing the physical limitations of the existing ten building structure. Specifically, the proposal called for industry-standard single-bed patient rooms and increased room sizes throughout the hospital and addressed access to the building and its effects on the street environment. Moreover, the proposal differed from an earlier proposal presented to the Committee in its removal of the residential tower and reduction of the height by eighty feet. The new building proposed for Lexington Avenue will be 436 feet tall and will extend from 76th to 77th Street. The link to the presentation is [here](#).

In the following Q&A session, members of the public and the board alike had other technical and general concerns associated with the redevelopment.

A poll was taken on the amount of support and opposition to the project. The prompt was “Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being ‘not at all’ and 5 being ‘completely support,’ do you support the Lenox Hill Hospital modernization plan?” The results were, out of 166 participants, 75 selected “1” (45%), 24 selected “2” (14%), 21 selected “3” (13%), 16 selected “4” (10%), and 30 selected “5” (18%).

Among the concerns and opinions discussed were:

- The project is inappropriate for the neighborhood and the damage to Lexington Avenue will be irreparable. Any semblance of a local neighborhood feel will be lost.
- The building size is much too large. The height is nearly 2 ½ that allowed by the Zoning resolution and the bulk nearly double.
- There is the possibility of increased medical expenses due to the proposed single-bed patient rooms.
- The private rooms will be used for wealthy paying patients - perhaps many international.
- The lack of a place to pick up/drop off/find an UBER/etc. will be a disaster. The traffic is already difficult.

- Eleven years of construction, including weekends, will be a disaster.
- Ambulance noise will be a disaster.
- The overall project seems SO out of place. (NYH, Columbia, NYU, Mt. Sinai have room around their buildings to make the process work; Lenox Hill does not. It is located within one residential block.
- The lack of ability to answer several very straightforward questions was disconcerting.
- Construction workers support the project because it will provide many good jobs.
- No environmental factors have been given consideration; carbon gases have not been mentioned, and there is no green roof.
- The bays for ambulances will require backing in and out from the same bay; there is no pass-through to the other side of the street.

**Item 2: Old Business**

No items of Old Business were discussed.

**Item 3: New Business**

No items of New Business were discussed.

The meeting was then adjourned at 10:45 PM.

*Elizabeth Ashby, Anthony Cohn and Sharon Pope-Marshall, Co-Chairs*

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

March 13, 2023

Stephanie Shellooe, AICP  
Director, Environmental Assessment and Review Division  
New York City Department of City Planning  
120 Broadway, 31<sup>st</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10271

**RE: Comments: Scoping of the Northwell Health/Lenox Hill Hospital Expansion.**

Dear Ms. Shellooe,

Please take a look at the comments agreed upon by the Zoning & Development Committee of Community Board 8 Manhattan regarding the scoping of the Northwell Health/Lenox Hill Hospital Expansion.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

- Many, if not most of the negative comments following have as their root cause the applicant's insistence that Lenox Hill Hospital remain fully open and functional throughout the construction process, an unnecessary demand in a community district that includes the area often referred to as "Bedpan Alley".
- The foundational premise of all single-occupancy rooms sized 40% larger than current double-occupancy rooms bloats the proposal.
- The massive height and bulk of the Lexington Avenue building would severely damage the scale and character of the neighborhood.
- The construction schedule is too long.

**ZONING and BULK**

- Current Zoning permits a total area of +/- 600,000 ZSF (average FAR 7.5); the proposal calls for 1,050,000 ZSF (average FAR 12.5). Requiring rezoning the eastern ¾ of block presents the appearance of "spot zoning".
- The proposed zoning and proposed bulk for the Lexington Avenue portion of the site (up to 100' west from Lexington Ave.) has an FAR of about 20. The proposed midblock rezoning will have an FAR of about 12, and the Park Avenue portion of the site will more or less retain its current FAR of about 8.5. The imbalance of the floor area distribution on the site creates a huge bulk on Lexington, although spreading the proposed floor area equally across the site could produce a building about 210 feet tall.
- The proposed tower, at 436 ft tall, is 2 ½ times the size of the tallest building permitted under the current zoning
- Its footprint, basically occupying the entire Lexington Avenue blockfront at its full height, is too massive and out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood.
- Applicant requires not only a change of zoning designation on ¾ of the entire site, but then must obtain permission for modification of height, setback and other bulk controls. The applicant wants to, in effect, select the most generous bulk and area regulations, and then seeks relief from those rules to build more.
- The massive tower will create a "canyon" shadow effect along Lexington Avenue and both side streets.

- Additional floor area bonus for transit improvement does not take into account the absence of accessible access to the Northbound IRT at 77th Street, which is an urgent need at this subway station.
- The proposal is located in residential area and occupies virtually the entire ground plane.

## **PROGRAM**

- The applicant proposes a 40% increase in ZFA with only a 6% increase in the number of beds, a 20% increase in operating rooms, 30% increase in ER treatment positions, and only an 8% increase in the number of labor, delivery and recovery rooms. At the same time, the applicant proposes a decrease in imaging rooms of 15%, presumably off-loading them to its new Third Avenue location.
- No drop-off area is proposed, which will further obstruct traffic on Lexington Avenue, as the entrance to the hospital is located on the corner of Lexington and 76th Street, adjacent to a bus lane.
- The entrance to the “mother and baby hospital” on Park Avenue will similarly disrupt traffic on Park Avenue. No real consideration has been given to the way that many patients arrive at the hospital – via public transportation or by car.
- If the new patient rooms were no larger than the current double-occupancy rooms (+/- 250 SF), the tower could be up to three floors (or 45 feet) shorter without sacrificing beds. The 475 rooms proposed at 355 SF will require nearly 170,000 SF of floor area (not including support space and circulation). The same number of beds, in rooms of 255 SF would occupy only about 120,000 SF.

## **SUBWAY and INCREASED PEDESTRIAN AND VEHICULAR TRAFFIC**

- No plans exist for an elevator to reach the northbound IRT station at 77th Street. No north-to-south transfer is possible before 125th Street. Not providing wheelchair access for subway riders coming to the station from downtown is unacceptable.
- Current plans, with a single, southbound elevator, are inadequate. The example of the elevator on the northbound side of the 86th Street station, which is frequently out of service, should inform decisions at 77th Street regarding number of elevators.
- Despite comments to the contrary made by the applicant, common sense would indicate that a much larger hospital will need more staff to run it, increasing traffic in the immediate area.
- Lack of parking is already a problem in the Upper East Side, and congestion pricing may increase demand in the area above 60th Street beyond current capacity. Contrary to the applicant’s assertion, demand for parking is likely to increase as a result of the proposal, and the applicant has not proposed any mitigation for such an increase.

## **CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE**

- The proposed construction schedule, a result of maintaining operations at the hospital while it is substantially reconstructed, is too long at nine years for core and shell and two additional years for interior fit-out. Likely at least a third of that could be eliminated if the applicant were not determined to keep the hospital open during construction.
- According the applicant, Saturday and late work permits will be requested throughout the construction period, disrupting normal activities for a generation of East Siders.
- No provisions have been identified for traffic disruption mitigation during construction.
- No provisions for unloading of building materials or possible additional lane closures for construction vehicles have been presented.
- The assumption that construction workers will all arrive by subway or bus is unrealistic. Parking and traffic will be affected throughout the eleven-year construction period.

- Noise and dust and debris are unavoidable with any construction, but the length of construction time anticipated for this proposal amplifies these issues beyond what is reasonable.
- No thought has been presented by the applicant regarding possible subway service disruption during construction.
- The proposed pedestrian tunnel between the service building on the north side of 77th Street and the hospital will be built using a cut-and-cover method. This will totally disrupt traffic on 77th Street during the construction period, which will last several months, as the street will be excavated in two parts, and excavated carefully to avoid cutting utilities buried in the street.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

*Russell Squire*

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Chair

*Elizabeth Ashby, Anthony Cohn, and Sharon Pope-Marshall*

Elizabeth Ashby, Anthony Cohn and Sharon Pope-Marshall  
Co-Chairs, Zoning & Development Committee

cc: Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York  
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President  
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative  
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District  
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District  
Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District  
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District  
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District  
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District  
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District  
Honorable Laura Kavanagh, Fire Commissioner, New York City Fire Department