



Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation

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November 15, 2017

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

(go to www.gvshp.org/prnov15 for electronic version)

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“Don’t Turn Our Neighborhood Into Silicon Alley”

Declare Elected Officials, Community Groups,

Affordable Housing Advocates & Merchant Leaders

*Decrying Slew of Tech-Related Developments from St. Marks to University Place,
Attendees Call for Mayor to Support Zoning Protections for Village & East Village,
Especially in Light of His Proposed “Tech Hub” on 14th Street*

Manhattan – The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP), City Councilmember Rosie Mendez, Assemblymember Deborah Glick, and merchant, community, and affordable housing leaders gathered on Third Avenue and St. Marks Place, across from the site of a planned \$150 million “boutique office building,” to demand that the Mayor take action to prevent this stretch of Greenwich Village and the East Village from becoming an extension of “Silicon Alley.” In addition to the above-mentioned development, the small area between Union Square and Astor Place, 5th and 3rd Avenues, is now home to three new planned tech-related office buildings on Broadway between 11th and 13th Street (one more than 300 feet tall), a new 300 ft. tall condo tower nearing completion on University Place and 12th Street, and a 313-room hotel with multiple bars under construction on 11th Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues (for which five walk-up apartment buildings with eighty units of housing, much of it affordable, was demolished), among many other projects. The tech industry has identified this area as a hot new location for development, buoyed by current zoning that encourages commercial and high-rise condo development, and the Mayor’s announced plan to seek zoning approvals from the City Council for a giant “Tech Hub” on 14th Street east of 4th Avenue that would accelerate this extension of “Silicon Alley” south from the Union Square/Flatiron District where it is now concentrated.

Those gathered instead called for the Mayor to implement a zoning plan for the area proposed by GVSHP and supported by Councilmember Rosie Mendez which would cap the height of new developments in the area to a maximum of between 80 and 145 feet, provide incentives for creating and preserving affordable housing, eliminate existing loopholes which encourage developers to sidestep affordable housing incentives, and reinforce the predominantly residential character of the neighborhood. The Mayor has thus far consistently rejected the plan. However, Councilmember Mendez has pledged not to approve the Mayor’s Tech Hub plan at the City Council unless these zoning protections are approved. Due to term limits, Mendez’s term ends this year, but her successor, Councilmember-elect Carlina Rivera, has also pledged not to approve the Tech Hub at the City Council without such protections for the surrounding neighborhood.

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"Boutique office buildings don't belong on St. Marks Place, 300-room hotels don't belong in the East Village, and three hundred foot tall tech office and condo towers don't belong in Greenwich Village. The Mayor continues to oppose common sense zoning protections for this neighborhood that would place reasonable limits on the height of new developments, encourage the preservation and retention of affordable housing, and reinforce the residential character of these predominantly residential neighborhoods. Instead, he continues to push for the expansion of Silicon Alley into this neighborhood, which will benefit his campaign fundraisers but not the people of these communities. He should do the right thing and protect these neighborhoods; but if he won't, we are very glad that outgoing Councilmember Rosie Mendez and incoming Councilmember Carlina Rivera have both pledged not to approve his 14th Street Tech Hub plan unless protections for the surrounding neighborhood are included. Without those protections, the overdevelopment problems in our neighborhood will go from bad to much, much worse if the Mayor's Tech Hub is approved; with the protections, it could be a win-win for everybody," said **Andrew Berman, Executive Director of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.**

"For years, I have requested and advocated for an amendment to the zoning resolution that would provide height limits and prevent out of scale development south of East 14th Street, specifically along University Place and Broadway, as well as from Astor Place to Union Square, along 3rd and 4th Avenues. The Administration's reluctance and failure to act has led many developers to demolish residential or mixed-use buildings after purchasing contiguous buildings and creating an assemblage of multiple lots. Now, another developer is taking advantage of the existing zoning on St. Marks Place and 3rd Avenue to build a \$150 million "boutique office building". We will continue to see development of this type that is out of character with the existing community as long as the zoning resolution remains as is," said **Councilwoman Rosie Mendez.**

"Multi-use communities need common sense zoning protections that will keep our neighborhood services in place while allowing new developments without radically altering an already vibrant neighborhood. Limiting bulk and density along the 3rd and 4th Avenue and University Place/Broadway corridors is crucial to preserving our neighborhood, and the delay is a serious threat that must be ended, now. We must ensure that future construction in the East Village will foster appropriate developments that keep long-term residents in their communities. I thank GVHSP for their continued work on this issue," said **Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick.**

"We must protect our neighborhood from out-of-character and out-of-scale commercial development that could displace residents who have lived in this area for decades. I am committed to working with GVHSP, my fellow elected officials, and all local stakeholders to ensure the overdevelopment of the 3rd and 4th Avenue and University Place/Broadway corridors does not become a reality," said **State Senator Brad Hoylman.**

"The City decided not to create stronger zoning protections for the Bowery and 3rd Avenue a decade ago, and now several more buildings will be demolished for office development. We need stronger zoning protections for the 3rd and 4th Avenue corridors or we are going to see demolition of mixed use and residential buildings to create large office buildings. It's time for the City to recognize that the zoning for this area is not adequate and will transform this largely residential community into silicon alley," said **Steve Herrick, the Exec. Director of Cooper Square Committee.**

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“We don’t want this area of the East Village to become row upon row of giant glassy office towers, we want the East Village to be preserved as a home to people who live here and love it. The city’s planned repurposing of our neighborhood as another Silicon Alley will not only devastate 3rd and 4th Avenues and East 14th Street, there will also be a domino effect that will put yet more developmental pressures eastward toward 2nd Avenue, 1st Avenue and onward. We need the city to pull the reins in on overdevelopment here, along with the rest of the Lower East Side,” said **Richard Moses, President, Lower East Side Preservation Initiative.**

“The East Village Community Coalition strongly supports the sensible and reasonable rezoning of 3rd and 4th Avenues. We live in the midst of a city-wide building boom. There are five projects within two blocks of my residence in the East Village. Without the contextual rezoning approved by the City Council in 2008, our large shared courtyard, designed to bring light and air into the surrounding buildings, would be darkened by the eternal shadow of glass towers. Our zoning protects residents, businesses and existing buildings, and provides incentives to sustain affordable housing. This residential area deserves the same protections we have to the east, not zoning that favors commercial development at the community’s expense. Development pressure here is increasing. You need only look around you to count the number of buildings under construction. We have already lost 100 units of housing, some of which were affordable, when buildings on East 11th Street were demolished to make way for the 300-room Moxy hotel for partying transients. We call for timely community planning that is accountable to the people who live here, before it is too late,” said **Laura Sewell, Director of the East Village Community Coalition.**

“I am asking Mayor deBlasio, City Planning Commissioner Lago, and Community Board 3 to support re-zoning protection as proposed by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, by Councilmember Rosie Mendez, and by others living in the community. This proposal would stop oversized development, protect the residential character of the area, and help protect and create affordable housing. A vote in support of the Tech Hub without such protections will be a vote for the overdevelopment and destruction of our neighborhood, and for building 300 foot tall high-rise luxury condos, tech offices, and hotels over appropriately-scaled buildings and decent, affordable housing,” said **Kathy Wakeham on behalf of the Metropolitan Council on Housing.**

“If this city does not enact sensible contextual zoning protections for this area, the developers and Tech Hub conquistadors will bury this area with eyesore towers of glass and steel and a hyper-gentrification that will displace residents, small businesses and the historic character of this community. Mr. Mayor: Do the right thing! Approve this rezoning plan before it’s too late,” said **David Mulkins, President, Bowery Alliance of Neighbors.**

For more information, see www.gvshp.org/savemyneighborhood.

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Rezoning Proposal for 3rd to 5th Avenue, Union Sq. to Astor Place



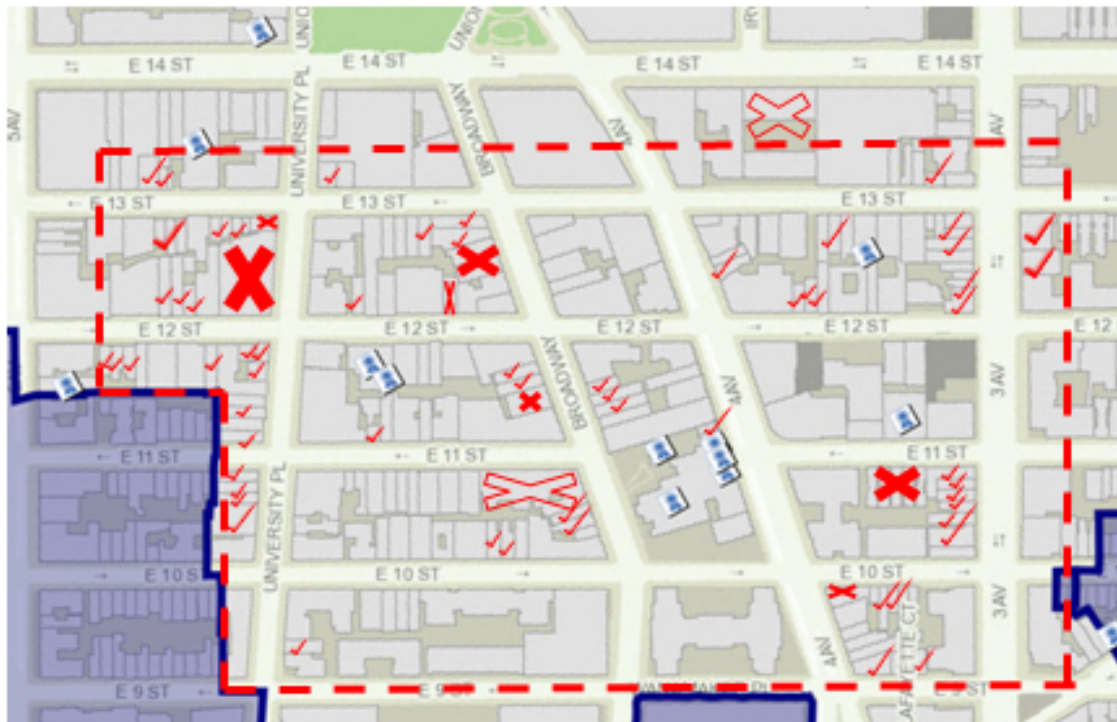
University Place/Broadway Rezoning Proposal

	Zoning District	Residential FAR	Commercial FAR	Community Facility FAR	Streetwall Height	Height Limit After Setbacks
Existing Zoning	C1-7	up to 6.02	2.0	6.5	none	none
	C6-1	up to 3.44	6.0 + up to 20% plaza bonus	6.5 + up to 20% plaza bonus	none	none
	R7-2	up to 3.44	0	6.5	none	none
Proposed Zoning	C1-7A (with incl. housing)	5.4 (7.2)	2.0	6.5	60-85 ft.	120 ft. (145 ft.)
	C4-4A (with incl. housing)	3.45 (4.6)	4.0	4.0	40-65 ft.	80 ft. (95 ft.)
	R7-A (with incl. housing)	3.45 (4.6)	0	4.0	40-65 ft.	80 ft. (95 ft.)

3rd/4th Avenues Rezoning Proposal

Zoning District	Residential FAR	Commercial FAR	Community Facility FAR	Streetwall Height	Height Limit After Setbacks
C6-2A (existing)	5.4 > 7.2 (Incl. Hsng.)	6.0	6.5	60-85 ft.	120 ft. > 145 ft. (Incl. Hsng.)
C1-7A (proposed)	5.4 > 7.2 (Incl. Hsng.)	2.0	6.5	60-85 ft.	120 ft. > 145 ft. (Incl. Hsng.)

Development Sites - current and potential 3rd to 5th Avenue, Union Sq. to Astor Place

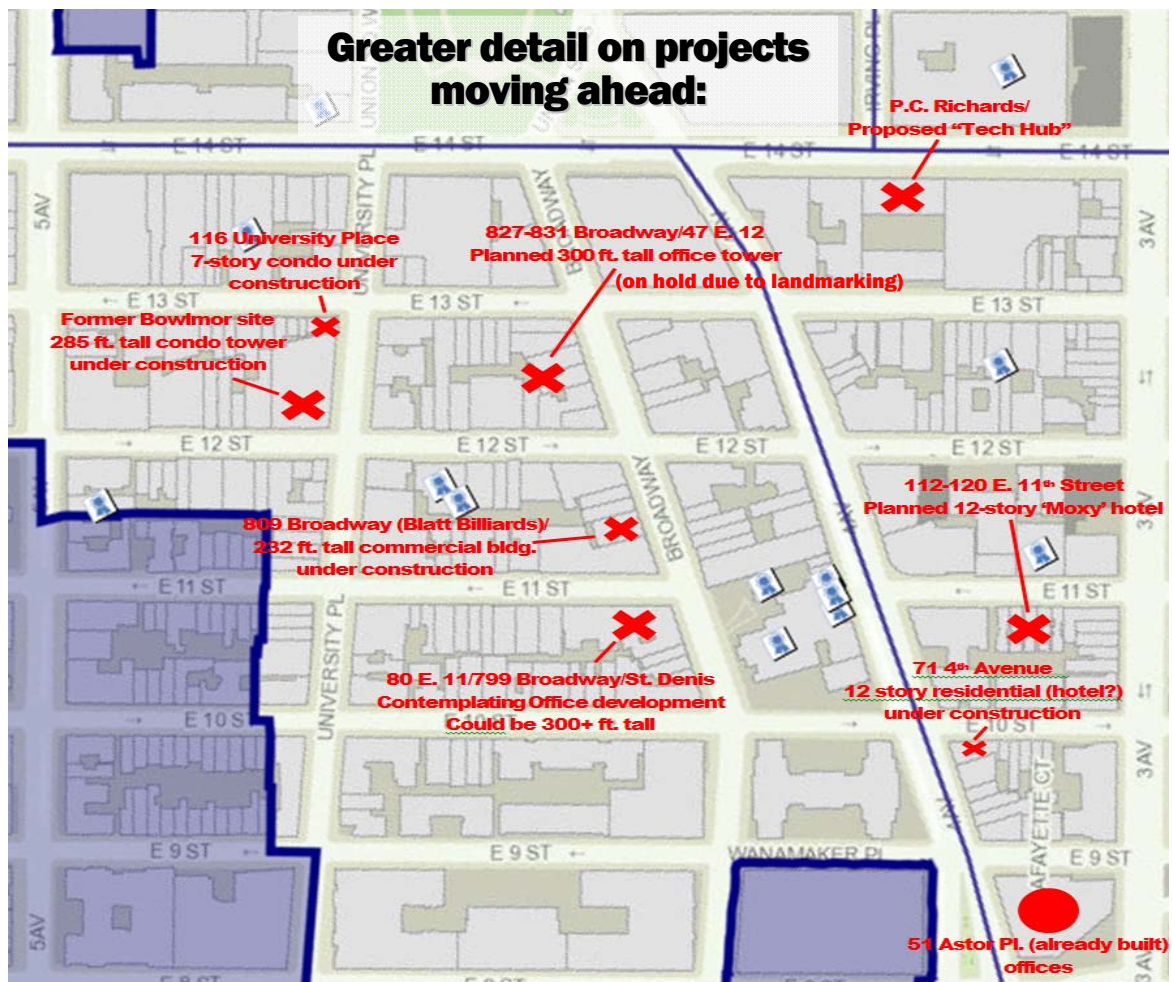


✗ - Underway

✗ - Being Planned

✓ - Potential

Greater detail on projects moving ahead:



Example: 112-120 East 11th Street.

Five 1890s tenements with almost 100 units of permanent housing, including rent-regulated units, were demolished to make way for a 300-room, 120 ft. tall 'Moxy' Hotel. This hotel chain is geared towards party-hopping millennials.

Current zoning allows larger as-of-right commercial development than residential development.

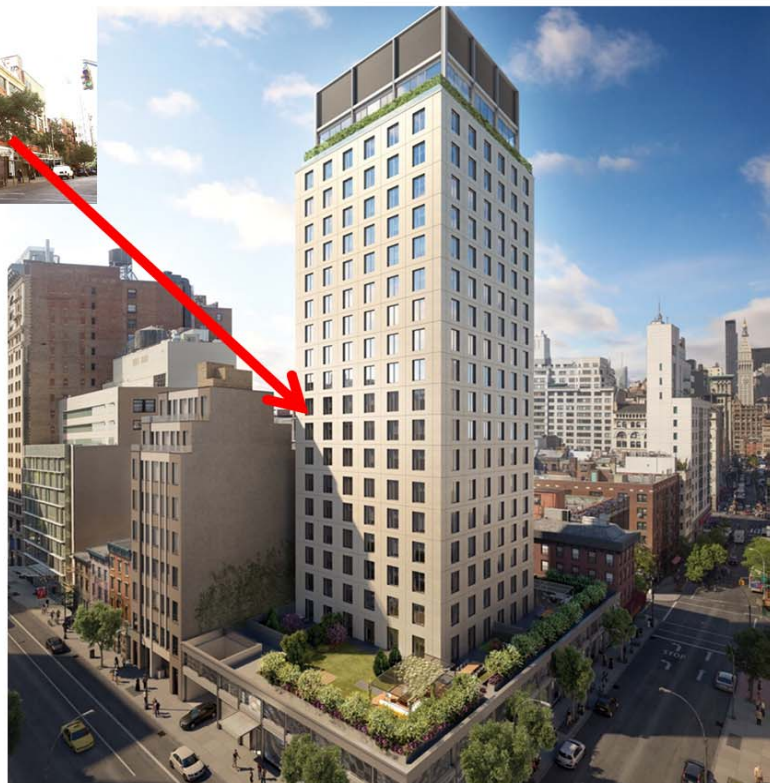


This provides a strong incentive for demolishing existing housing, sidestepping current affordable housing incentives, and building purely commercial buildings.

Under the proposed rezoning, these buildings would likely never have been demolished. But had they been, under the proposed rezoning they would have been replaced with a residential building with up to 14,422 sq. ft. of affordable housing.



**110 Univ. Pl.
(12th St.)
285 foot tall
residential
Under
construction**



Under proposed rezoning:

- would have been 145 ft. tall
- could have included 20,633 sq. ft. of affordable housing



Greenwich Village

SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

232 East 11th Street
New York, NY 10003

City Council District 2 Candidate Questionnaire

Carlina Rivera:

Question: 2. The City is proposing a Tech Hub for 124 East 14th Street. Whatever the merits of the proposed project, under current conditions it is extremely likely this project will accelerate the extension of "Silicon Alley" south from Union Square down to Astor Place, and through the University Place/Broadway/3rd Avenue/4th Avenue corridors, vastly increasing pressure for out-of-scale and commercial development in this largely residential area. Community groups and Councilmember Mendez have said that the City should be required to approve the proposed zoning protections for the University Place to 3rd Avenue corridors in order to get City Council approval for the Tech Hub. Would you be willing to use your leverage as a City Councilmember to condition your support for the Tech Hub upon the city approving zoning protections for the adjacent residential area? If not, why?

Candidate
Answer:

Since the NYC Council has to vote to approve or disapprove any ULURP (Uniform Land Use Reform Procedures) matters and other Councilmembers have successfully negotiated zoning changes and benefits for their district in exchange for the support of a Mayoral Administration project, then I would use my leverage as Councilwoman to condition my support for the Tech Hub upon the city approving zoning protection for the adjacent residential area. While I understand that the TechHub will bring valuable training and job opportunities to the district, without the needed zoning protections for the neighborhood, it would lead to acceleration in out of scale development for the surrounding residential neighborhood. The district deserves both a contextual rezoning and job development, and the Administration can make that happen.