



Greenwich  
Village  
Society for  
Historic  
Preservation

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**PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release – April 22, 2107

**VILLAGE RESIDENTS & COUNCILWOMAN ROSIE MENDEZ CALL ON MAYOR  
TO MOVE AHEAD WITH REZONING OF AREA  
FACING FLOOD OF OVERSIZED HIGH-RISES**

*\* Mayor Is Urged to Support Community Plan  
to Cap New Building Heights, Encourage Affordable Housing, and  
Preserve Residential Character of Area Between Union Square and Astor Place*

*\* Mayor's Nearby Proposed 'Tech Hub' Would Accelerate Overdevelopment Unless  
Paired With Neighborhood Zoning Protections, Say Advocates;  
City Councilwoman, Who Must Approve Tech Plan, Agrees*

Manhattan – The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP) and City Councilmember Rosie Mendez were joined by hundreds of residents to call upon Mayor de Blasio to finally support a proposed rezoning of the area between Union Square and Astor Place, to prevent a growing wave of oversized, commercial and luxury condo high-rises in the predominantly-residential area. A half dozen such projects are underway or being planned in the fifteen block area, several of which are to be 300 feet tall or possibly greater (see attached). All are luxury condos, hotels, or office buildings, and none would include affordable housing. For the past two years, GVSHP, Councilwoman Mendez, other elected officials including Borough President Brewer, the local community board, and literally thousands of New Yorkers have written the Mayor asking him to support GVSHP's rezoning proposal for the area that would put reasonable height caps in place for new construction (see attached) and incentivize the inclusion or preservation of affordable housing.

The Mayor has adamantly refused to support the rezoning proposal, falsely claiming that planned construction is in scale with the neighborhood (many are taller than every other building in the proposed rezoning area), that there are no additional potential development sites in the neighborhood, that the rezoning would not create any affordable housing, and that the rezoning would impose height limits much lower than existing buildings in the neighborhood. GVSHP presented evidence at the press conference debunking those claims (see attached).

Two recent developments have brought the fight to protect this area from oversized and otherwise undesirable development to a turning point: 1) the size and number of planned new buildings is growing so rapidly, including one plan for what could be a 400 foot tall building at 799 Broadway/80 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street; and 2) the Mayor has proposed developing a 'Tech Hub' on city-owned land currently occupied by a P.C Richards store on East 14<sup>th</sup> Street at the northern end of the district. That 'Tech Hub' would anchor and extend "Silicon Alley" from Union Square down to Astor Place, where Facebook and IBM have recently located. Thus construction of the Tech Hub without the long-sought zoning protections for the blocks to the south would accelerate this overdevelopment trend, lead to more and larger oversized office, hotel, and luxury condo developments in the area, and provide no affordable housing.

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However, to be built, the 'Tech Hub' needs City Council approval, since it requires zoning changes to increase the allowable size of development on the site and change the allowable use from predominantly residential to commercial. GVSHP, neighborhood advocates, and City Councilwoman Rosie Mendez stood together to say that no approvals should be granted for the 'Tech Hub' until and unless the Mayor agrees to the proposed rezoning to protect the neighboring residential blocks. Current zoning for much of the area dates to 1961, and encourages tall towers with no height limits whatsoever, and has no affordable housing provisions (see attached).

**GVSHP Executive Director Andrew Berman** said *"It's outrageous that Mayor de Blasio is dealing in 'alternative facts' about this neighborhood and the wave of oversized, inappropriate development it's facing. 300 foot tall towers replacing low-scale 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings is not "in character" for the neighborhood, and the Mayor is just lying when he says our rezoning plan would create no affordable housing. In fact our proposed rezoning has the potential to create hundreds of thousands of square feet of affordable housing. Had the Mayor adopted our rezoning when we presented it to him two years ago, just the developments in process now could have created 50,000 sq. ft. of affordable housing. The Mayor also claimed two years ago that a rezoning was unnecessary because there were no real potential development sites in this neighborhood. But as we speak, six developments in the area are now moving forward, and dozens more are possible in the months and years ahead. It is unfathomable that the Mayor would defend zoning that will only result in luxury condo, hotel and office high-rises, when we are proposing zoning that would keep new development in character for the neighborhood and could include thousands of square feet of affordable housing. His 'Tech Hub' plan will only make a bad situation in this neighborhood worse unless coupled with these long-overdue zoning protections. The Mayor's real estate developer campaign donor friends may benefit from his plans and current zoning, but residents of the Village and East Village do not. We stand united, with our Councilmember, to say that if you want approvals for your Tech Hub plan, we want the zoning protections our neighborhood needs."*

**Councilwoman Rosie Mendez** stated: *"The Administration has announced that it has chosen a developer for the PC Richards site located on East 14th Street and while I acknowledge that this is a great opportunity for economic and workforce development in the technology industry, I have many concerns. First and foremost, this would be a missed opportunity to create housing on a city-owned site. Equally important is the correlational density impact of the Union Square Tech Hub in the surrounding community. For years, I have advocated and requested a contextual rezoning of University Place. This proposed PC Richards Silicon Alley Tech Hub will impact residents in the area residing in the adjacent buildings which are currently under great pressure by developers. I would consider supporting the Tech Hub if, and only if, we can amend the zoning resolution to provide protections and relief to the surrounding community. Furthermore, I am offended by Mayoral spokesperson Melissa Grace's recent statement about certain groups using this 'project as a pawn to change unrelated zoning blocks away.' I want to make clear that these 'groups' are constituents of mine and of the Mayor and their cries for help have fallen on deaf ears at City Hall. This zoning is very much related since it surrounds the proposed tech hub and like a rock thrown into a pond, it will have waves of consequences to that area just blocks away."*

**State Senator Brad Hoylman** said: *"I join the community in strongly supporting the University Place/Broadway Rezoning proposed by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation to protect our residential neighborhoods from out-of-scale development. I'm proud to stand with GVSHP and Council Member Mendez in calling for a greater commitment to contextual zoning that respects the character of our neighborhood."*

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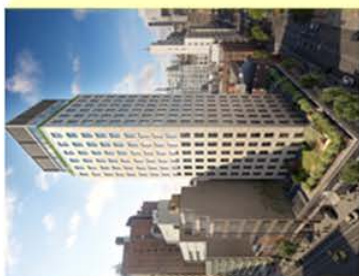
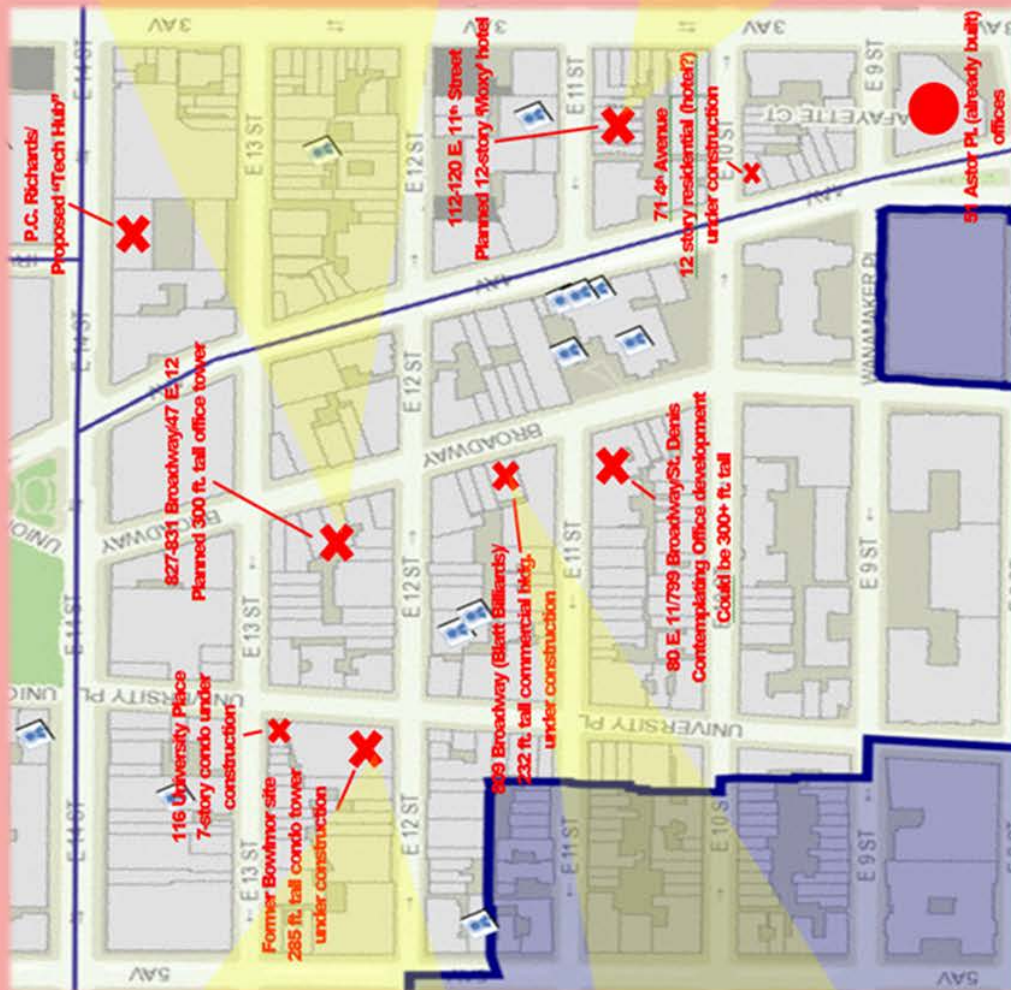
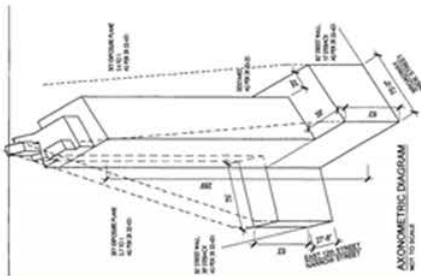
**Community Board #2 Chair Terri Cude** said *“Community Board No. 2, Manhattan’s supports contextual rezoning of the University Place/Broadway corridor. We passed a resolution strongly supporting this rezoning in January of 2015. We continue to believe that these proposed controls will prevent vastly out-of-context development on these important Greenwich Village blocks.”*

**Elizabeth Oyen, East Village Community Coalition board member** said *“As it rushes to our Tech Future, The East Village Community Coalition hopes the City doesn't forget the importance of neighborhoods and communities. We desperately need additional protections here to insure that an amazing Tech Hub both preserves and creates.”*

The Mayor’s Tech Hub plan is expected to be released and enter the public review and approval process, which culminates at the City Council, later this year or early next year.

Additional information can be found at [www.gvshp.org/savemyneighborhood](http://www.gvshp.org/savemyneighborhood).

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# 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 market rate 7.2 w/affordable housing	2.0	6.5	60-85 ft.	120 ft. M.R. 145 ft. w/A.H.
	C4-4A (with incl. housing)	3.45 market rate 4.6 w/affordable housing	4.0	4.0	40-65 ft.	80 ft. M.R. 95 ft. w/A.H.
	R7-A (with incl. housing)	3.45 market rate 4.6 w/affordable housing	0	4.0	40-65 ft.	120 ft. M.R. 145 ft. w/A.H.



809 Broadway (11/12<sup>th</sup>)  
232 foot tall  
commercial/residential  
Under construction



2015: City claimed “not a potential development site”

Under proposed rezoning:

- would have been 95 ft. tall
- could have included 3,473 sq. ft. of affordable housing





110 Univ. Pl.  
(12<sup>th</sup> 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



Demolition resulted in loss of rent-regulated, affordable units for long-term tenants

Under proposed rezoning:

- New development would have been residential, not hotel
- could have included 14,422 sq. ft. of affordable housing

**112-120 E. 11<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**(3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Avenues)**

**120 foot tall**

**Hotel**

**Demolition underway**





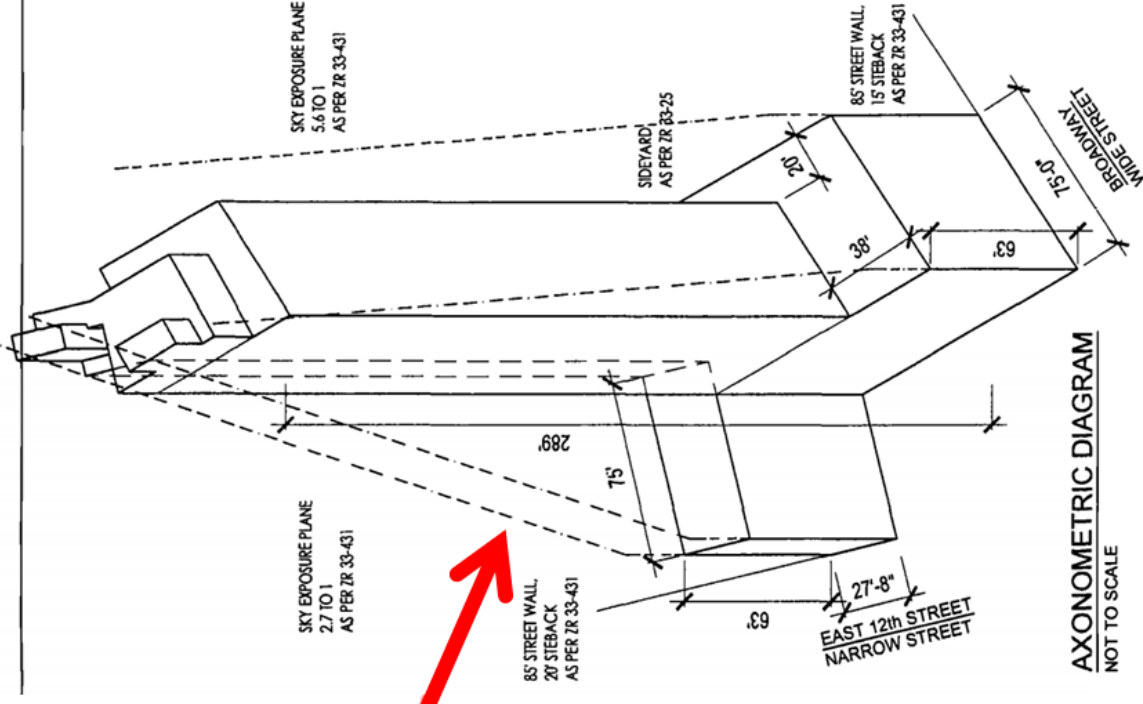


827-831 Broadway/  
 47 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street  
 300 foot tall  
 Offices  
 Demolition not yet begun

2015:  
 City claimed “not  
 a potential  
 development  
 site”

Under proposed  
 rezoning:

- would be 95 ft. tall max.
- could have included 8,142 sq. ft. of affordable housing





80 E. 11<sup>th</sup> / 799 Broadway

Planning stages

200,000+ sq. ft.



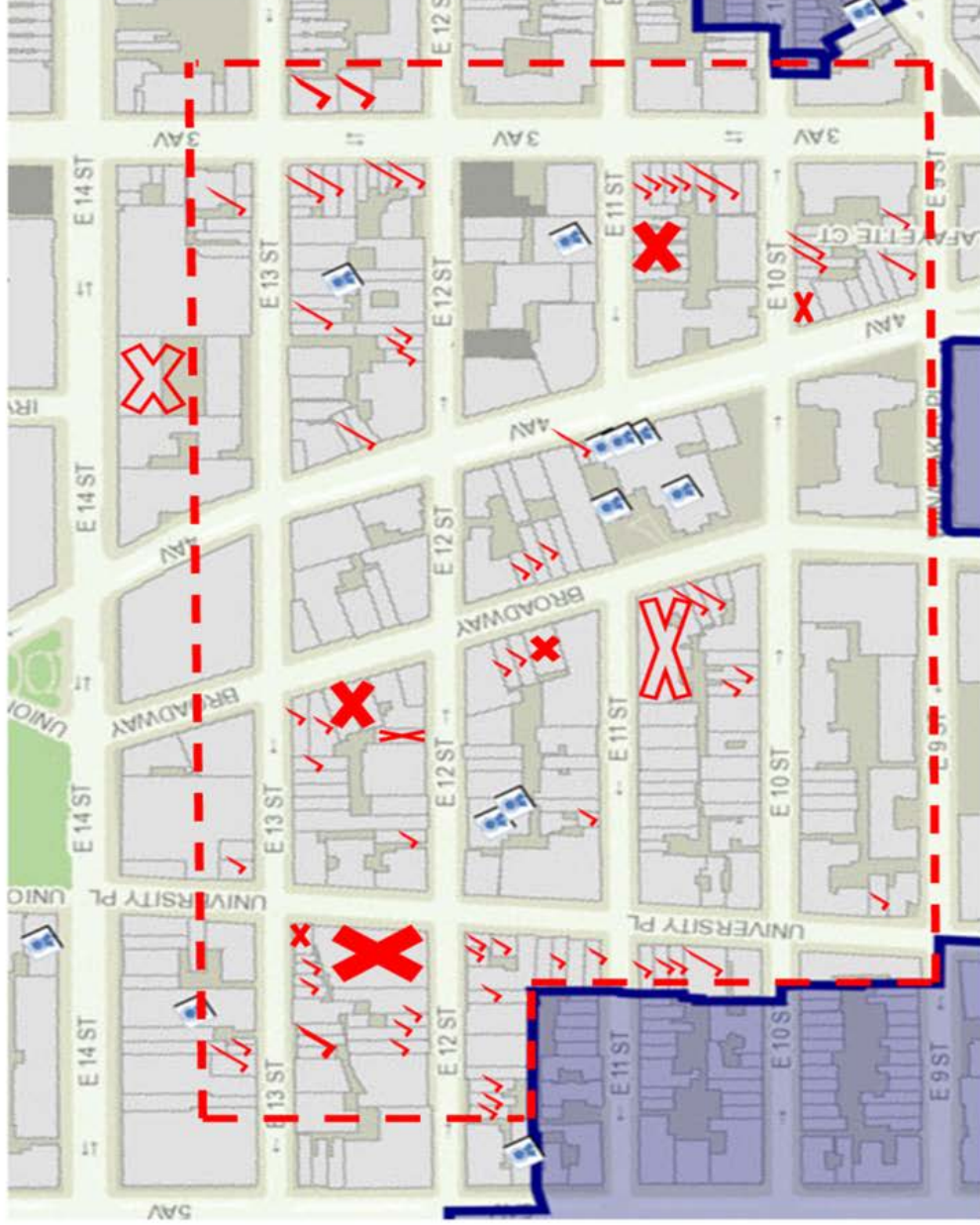
2015: City claimed “not a potential development site”

Under proposed rezoning:

- would be 95 ft. tall max.
- could include 13,800 sq. ft. of affordable housing



## Development Sites – current and potential



**X** - Underway      **X** - Being Planned      **✓** - Potential

## The Mayor says:

*"This proposal would...reduce new buildings to well below those that already exist in the neighborhood, and would not yield any incremental affordable housing." -- Mayoral spokeswoman Melissa Grace, 4/17/17, [DNAinfo](#)*

## In fact:

- More than 85% of existing buildings fall below the proposed new height limits ([source: NYC OpenData](#))
- Most buildings don't conform with the existing zoning regulations anyway
- Under proposed rezonings, several hundred thousand square feet of affordable housing could be built



**Traditional Silicon Alley--  
Flatiron District  
Broadway**



## **Proposed 'Tech Hub' (P.C. Richards site)**

- Requires City Council Approval
- Larger than zoning allows
- Commercial rather than residential use
- No affordable housing
- Will accelerate undesirable development to the south

## **The New 'Silicon Alley'?**

**770 Broadway  
(Facebook)**

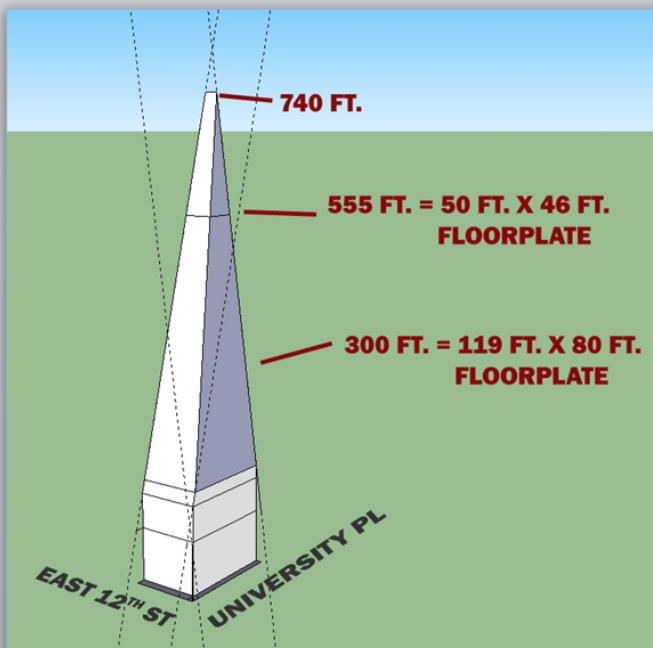
**51 Astor Pl.  
(IBM)**

**New Tech  
Concentration--  
SoHo/Lower  
Broadway**

# University Place/Broadway Corridor

## Zoning Districts:

- Dates to 1961
- Non-contextual/no height limits
- Encouraged tall towers surrounded by open space or low platforms
- Bonuses for “plazas”
- Some reflect historically commercial nature of part of area
- Incentives for “community facilities” (incl. dorms, other university facilities)
- **No affordable housing component**



Could be residential, commercial (hotel), or community facility (dorm)

Allowable development in zoning districts around University Place and Broadway corridors

