



Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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Eleazar Bueno, Chairperson
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

March 2, 2021

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

Re: Resolution commenting on the Department of City Planning's Proposed Citywide Hotel Text Amendment.

Dear Chair Lago:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, February 23, 2021, Community Board 12, Manhattan passed the following resolution with a unanimous vote of 39 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting, supporting the Department of City Planning's proposed Citywide Hotel Text Amendment with some comments listed below.

- Whereas: In June 2018, Community Board 12-Manhattan ("CB12M") passed a resolution supporting the Department of City Planning's ("DCP") citywide text amendment (the "M-1 Hotel Text Amendment") to introduce a Special Permit under the jurisdiction of the City Planning Commission ("CPC") to establish restrictions on the development of new hotels, motels, tourist cabins, and boatels in Light Manufacturing (M1) districts to ensure a balanced mix of uses and sufficient opportunities to support the future growth of permitted uses in M1-zoned sites including industrial, commercial, community facility, residential and institutional uses. The Text Amendment was adopted in December 2018 and applies to all M-1 districts excluding MX or paired M-1/R districts, M-1 districts that include or are adjacent to airport property, and M-1 districts with existing hotel Special Permit provisions; and
- Whereas: Prior to the M-1 Hotel Text Amendment, hotels were permitted as-of-right in M-1 districts. Since 2010 there was a rapid increase in the development of hotels in M-1 districts, particularly on sites near transit. Thirteen percent (13%) of all existing hotel rooms in the City are in M-1 zoned districts. In 2018, there are 24,000 hotel rooms in the development pipeline, 30% of which are located in M-1 zoning districts; and
- Whereas: Over the last several decades, New York City (the "City") became one of the most popular tourist destinations. In 2017 the City was visited by nearly 63 million tourists. This increase in tourism drove an increased demand for hotels and hotel development citywide. Since 2010 hotel room inventory increased 42%, with more than 33,000 new hotel rooms created in 220 new hotel properties; and

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- Whereas: While the growth of tourism has had positive economic development impacts for the City, land-use conflicts have also resulted. The rapid growth of tourism and hotel demand gave hotel development a competitive advantage over other uses permitted as-of-right in M-1 zoned districts. This competitive advantage may directly or indirectly detract from the development of other permitted uses required to fulfill neighborhood development needs and objectives, and may also accelerate neighborhood change; and
- Whereas: The Special Permit required for new hotel developments in applicable M-1 zoning districts now triggers full ULURP, including community board review, that examines developments on a site-specific, case-by-case basis and allows for the consideration of the appropriateness of new hotel developments in both M-1 districts with active light industrial business activity and well as M-1 districts where the City may want to direct growth of other development types, including employment sectors or housing. The Special Permit allows CPC to consider the balanced mix of uses, jobs, and other opportunities for future growth and development of light industrial and other uses permitted in M-1 zones; and
- Whereas: Over time, the rapid growth of new hotels across the city has led the CPC to adopt a variety of special permits to address myriad planning concerns, relating to residential development goals, neighborhood character, and conflicts with adjacent uses. Consequently, the City has an inconsistent and patchwork framework for new hotel development; and
- Whereas: Although the COVID-19 pandemic caused an abrupt and precipitous drop in hotel occupancy and construction, the NYC Hotel Market Analysis conducted by DCP in 2020 predicts that the hotel market is expected to recover by 2025. A more uniform zoning framework for new hotels citywide could support more predictable development, limit the extent to which a hotel use may impair the future use or development of the surrounding area, and minimize conflicts with adjacent uses; and
- Whereas: DCP proposes a citywide zoning text amendment (the "Citywide Hotel Text Amendment") to establish a new special permit (the "New Special Permit") under the jurisdiction of the CPC for new hotels, motels, tourist cabins, and boatels in C1, C2, C4, C5, C6, C8, and Mixed-Use (MX) and paired M1/R districts, which are located throughout Washington Heights-Inwood. The New Special Permit would require new hotels and other transient uses to go through ULURP and would override existing special permit requirements except for the existing regulations adopted in December 2018 for hotels in M1 districts which would be retained; and
- Whereas: The Citywide Hotel Text Amendment would create a more consistent zoning framework and allow community input on these projects for the first time. It would ensure that new hotels are established on appropriate sites based on reasonable considerations regarding the hotel development's impacts on the future use and development of the surrounding area and the potential to conflict with nearby commercial, industrial, and residential uses that new transient uses may introduce; and
- Whereas: On December 21, 2020, DCP released the draft scope of work for the Environmental Impact Statement to be performed in connection with Citywide Hotel Text Amendment for public comment. On February 3, 2021, Ryan Cote, City Planner with DCP's Manhattan office, presented the proposed Citywide Hotel Text Amendment to CB12M's Land Use Committee; now, therefore, be it

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Resolved: Community Board 12-Manhattan supports the Department of City Planning's proposed Citywide Hotel Text Amendment and offers the following comments:

1. The Special Permit application should require a detailed financial feasibility analysis with the application for a Special Permit and an independent review of the analysis.
2. The review of any application under the New Special Permit should include a thorough analysis of the socio-economic impacts of the proposed hotel.
3. An additional ULURP review should be required for any proposed conversion to a homeless shelter, half-way house or other transient facility of any hotel, motel, tourist cabin or boatel developed pursuant to the New Special Permit.
4. The final text amendment should include a concise list of zoning districts where hotel development is permitted as-of-right, i.e.: is not subject to the New Special Permit.
5. DCP should publish a list of all comments received in response to the December 2020 draft scoping documents and a description of how the scope was modified in response to the comments received.
6. ULURP applications should not be certified within 60 days of community boards going on hiatus for the summer and should not be certified or the ULURP time clock started while community boards are on hiatus during the summer.

Sincerely,



Eleazar Bueno
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Comptroller
Hon. Brian Benjamin, State Senator
Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Assembly Member
Hon. Ydanis Rodriguez, Council Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Council Member