



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**BURT LAZARIN**  
Chair

**JESSE R. BODINE**  
District Manager

October 22, 2019

James Patchett  
President and CEO  
New York City Economic Development Corporation  
1 Liberty Plaza  
New York, NY 10006

**Re: 495 Eleventh Avenue, Slaughterhouse Site — Update**

Dear Mr. Patchett,

On September 17, 2019 the New York Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and Radson Development (Radson) presented an update on the development project (“Project) at 495 Eleventh Avenue (39<sup>th</sup>/40<sup>th</sup> Streets) — the Slaughterhouse site — to the Clinton/Hell’s Kitchen Land Use Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4).

MCB4 has consistently expressed a desire for the Slaughterhouse site to be developed with the maximum amount of permanently affordable housing. The community has also advocated for a range of income bands to maintain the diverse mix of our neighborhood. Radson’s current proposal provides an opportunity to meet these community needs while developing a successful project.

At its October 2, 2019 Full Board Meeting, MCB4 by 35 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 0 present but not eligible to vote, voted to support the latest plan for this site, with minor modifications, and to reiterate community concerns and requests communicated to EDC over the past four years regarding this development site.

**History of the Slaughterhouse Site**

The New York Butchers’ Dressed Meat Company’s “Slaughterhouse” was a block-long building and built in two sections – the 39<sup>th</sup> Street corner in 1903-1905 and the 40<sup>th</sup> Street corner in 1917-

1919. The New York Butchers' Company was formed by local butchers and provisioners to break the monopoly held by the midwestern "beef trust" which dictated meat prices. At that time, with its proximity to water transport as well as to the freight rail yards, the West Side was an important industrial center for the City.

The original six-story Neo-Renaissance style building of steel and masonry was designed by Horgan & Slattery with lower floors faced with limestone and upper floors with dark orange brick and white terra cotta, with an air of an imposing civic building. But there was no mistaking its purpose: six giant sculptures of rams and steers jutted from the exterior of the sixth floor. A "roof garden" for livestock was accessed by a seven-floor ramp visible only from the west. The killing floor was one floor down.

The Slaughterhouse remained in operation until the late 1950s. The City took title to the building in 1975 following a lengthy period of unpaid real estate taxes by the owner. At that time, a private developer planned to erect an office building on the site but the vote to allow it was delayed by the Manhattan Borough President, David Dinkins.

### **MCB4 Effort to Develop the Site**

During the late 1980s MCB4 urged the Landmarks Preservation Commission to designate the property as a landmark. The Commission did not do so and the building deteriorated until it was considered structurally unsound and finally demolished. It took 18 months to complete the demolition.

Between the time of demolition until the late 1990s there was no plan put forth to develop the Site and the vacant lot was turned into car parking for the New York City Police Department.

The Site was again brought to the attention of the City by MCB4 as a possible affordable housing development site when the Western Railyards Points of Agreement was agreed upon by the City Council and Administration in December 2009. The Site was identified as a "Proposed Development" site in MCB4's 2014 Affordable Housing Plan with preliminary analysis identifying the Site being able to provide 322 apartments, 100% of which would be affordable to a range of income bands. The Site could, in part, satisfy the City's yet-to-be fulfilled affordable housing commitments in the District, including 150 units from Site M (Tenth Avenue between 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> Streets) and 75 units from another proposed site.

### **Current Proposed Slaughterhouse Project**

Radson plans to maximize affordable housing units at the Slaughterhouse Project without HPD/HDC capital subsidy. It proposes to create 350 affordable units serving a diverse range of household incomes with a focus on family-sized units.

It would comply with Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Option Two (30% of total residential floor area permanently affordable to up to 3 income bands with weighted average of 80% AMI). Seventy-five apartments (21%) will be supportive housing for formerly homeless and special needs populations with incomes around 30% AMI. There would be on-site supportive housing services.

Residential amenities (rooftop terrace, gym, storage, etc.) would be available to all tenants.

The proposed design of the Project promises to “contribute to the mixed-use character of the built environment adding vibrancy to this newly developing neighborhood.” The design would use materials which relate to the industrial past of the site.

The Project proposes to “integrate pedestrian and vehicle scale of Eleventh Avenue” with a three-story base building covering entire site supporting two towers. The towers would be set back from property line “to create a more appealing pedestrian and streetscape experience.” One tower would be a hotel, the other a residential building.

#### **MCB4 Comments**

As stated, the Radson proposed Project aims to achieve many of the community objectives. At this stage, however, MCB4 requests the following modifications to the plan:

##### Supportive Housing

MCB4 requests an increase in the number of supportive housing units from 75 to 100 units for the formerly homeless and special needs population.

##### Unit Size:

In affordable housing in MCD4, demand is greater for 2-bedroom units over 3-bedroom units. MCB4 requests that the number of 3-bedroom units be reduced with an increase in the number of 2-bedroom units. The total number of 3-bedroom units should not total more than 10% of the total unit count.

##### Commercial Space:

The community has consistently requested an affordable supermarket and the Project includes space for one. MCB4 requests that because of the difficult market conditions of traditional retail, that allotted space for retail be added to the grocery store area to increase the size.

##### Plaza or Playground

MCB4 would also like to note that there may be an opportunity to create a plaza or a playground on the eastern portion of 39<sup>th</sup> Street, which has been closed off between Eleventh and Twelfth

Avenues. To the Board's knowledge, this portion of 39<sup>th</sup> Street is owned and controlled by the city. An amenity of this kind would greatly benefit an area with little open space.

Pedestrian Safety

MCB4 is aware Radson is working with NYC Department of Transportation on ensuring this area of Eleventh Avenue is designed to create a safe and efficient pedestrian experience. The Board must be a part of the design process regarding pedestrian safety improvements.

Overall, Manhattan Community Board 4 is encouraged by the proposed two tower hotel and affordable residential project. MCB4 has engaged with EDC and various developers regarding the Slaughterhouse site now for over four years. This iteration offers the opportunity to meet community needs and comes closer to the project envisioned by this Board a decade ago. MCB4 looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with EDC and the developer toward the ULURP certification of this development.

Sincerely,



Burt Lazardin  
Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 4



Jean-Daniel Noland  
Chair  
Clinton/Hell's Kitchen Land Use Committee

cc: Hon. Jerrold Nadler, U.S Congressman  
Hon. Brad Hoylman, New York State Senate  
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Linda B. Rosenthal, New York State Assembly  
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Corey Johnson, New York City Council Speaker  
Radson Development