



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

September 26, 2022

Dan Garodnick
Chair & Director
City Planning Commission & Department of City Planning
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

re: **ULURP #220468PCM**
603-613 West 29th Street
Site Acquisition & Selection
for West 23rd Street EMS #7 Relocation

Dear Chair Garodnick,

At the July 18, 2022 meeting of Manhattan Community Board 4 Chelsea Land Use Committee (CLU), New York City Fire Department (FDNY) and Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) presented this land use application, seeking approval for site acquisition and selection of Block 675, Lot 12. At MCB4's regularly scheduled full Board meeting on September 7, 2022, voted 44 for, 0 against, 0 abstain, and 2 present not eligible to approve with conditions the above referenced ULURP for Site Acquisition & Selection for the construction of a permanent station for EMS#7 at 613 West 29th Street (between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues on the northside of the street) on the condition that an **immediate** solution to the current temporary outdoor station at West 23rd street be secured. The mayor's office, FDNY and DCAS must work with the Gateway Development Commission Project and ensure an enclosed location for this vital public safety facility at no cost to the city.

Background

Since temporary relocation more than ten years ago of the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) EMS Station #7, to 512 West 23rd Street, MCB4, following the closure of St.

Vincent's Hospital, MCB4 has been vocal that a suitable indoor permanent location be identified.¹

In 2016 and 2017 MCB4 worked with the Department of City Planning (DCP) to develop a rezoning framework for Block 675 (West 29th to West 30th, 11th to 12 Avenues) which included accommodating needed public facilities and infrastructure such as an EMS station. In 2018, as part of a rezoning and development of that block (180127 ZMM, N 180128 ZRM, 180129 ZSM), MCB4 and the City Council obtained a written commitment from Douglaston Development to provide the land for the #7 EMS Station as part of their mixed-use residential development at 601 West 29th Street.²

Concurrently, MCB4 was made aware that part of the proposed site was being discussed for construction staging for the Hudson River Tunnel Project, part of the larger Gateway Project. Therefore, at the same time as the rezoning, MCB4 collaborated with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ), then the lead stakeholder in the Gateway Project, to secure yet another temporary EMS # 7 site to avoid conflict with EMS station development and Gateway construction staging. The PANYNJ proposed multiple garage buildings in the West 30s & West 40s. In 2018, MCB4 toured multiple locations with PANYNJ and recommended possible locations that would not conflict with other adjacent residential uses. The underlying concept was the Gateway Project would use the space for their own operations and temporarily house EMS Station #7 off site during the construction of the Hudson River Tunnel Project, thereby avoiding conflict with Gateway construction staging. Then the Governor of New Jersey pulled out of the Gateway project and all planning came to a halt.

Meanwhile, after a decade of advocating, planning, and negotiation, The New York City Fire Department (FDNY) and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) seek site acquisition and site selection approval for an approximately 12,500-square-foot, privately-owned property (the Development Site) located at 613 West 29th Street in Manhattan (Block 675, part of Lot 12). FDNY is proposing to relocate the existing Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Station 7 facility from its current temporary location at 512 West 23rd Street in Manhattan to a new, approximately 18,068 square foot facility to be constructed at the proposed Development Site in the West Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan, Community District 4. The site will serve the EMS #7 district from West 12th to West 62nd Streets, 5th Avenue to the Hudson River.

¹ [MCB4's letters on this topic 2012-2022](#)

² <https://cbmanhattan.cityofnewyork.us/cb4/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2020/02/22-CLU-Letter-to-DCP-re-ULURP-Application-for-601-W.-29th-St.-180127-ZMM.pdf>

Location & Siting

The proposed 12,500 square foot development site is located at 613 West 29th Street between 11th Avenue and the West Side Highway in the West Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan. The proposed development site is located in a C6-4X underlying zoning district within Area B2 of the Special Hudson River Park District (HRP) as well as a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) Area. C6 zones are commercial zoning districts that allow for a wide range of high-density commercial uses requiring a central location. Most residential, community facility, and commercial uses in Use Groups 1 through 12 are allowed. The HRP modifies the bulk regulations of the underlying C6-4X district. The maximum base FAR within an MIH Area is 10.0, which may be increased up to 12.0 through a transfer of floor area from the Hudson River Park pursuant to a CPC special permit. DCAS and FDNY have looked for alternative space and not deemed any other location suitable for this use.

Proposed Project Design and Use

The proposed structure will be an approximately 18,068 square foot EMS Station 7 facility to be constructed on a 12,500 square foot, vacant portion of Block 675, Lot 12, adjacent to, and immediately west of, the mixed-use building currently under construction as part of the 601 W. 29th Street development. The parcel has 125 feet of frontage along West 29th Street and is approximately 98.75 feet in depth. According to the current concept, the 3-story building will have a height of approximately 43 feet. There will be 80 FDNY staff assigned to the proposed EMS Station 7 facility. This proposed 3-story facility will have space for 8 EMS vehicles and 1 supervisor SUV on the first floor. On the second floor, there will be space for 18 parking spaces for employee parking. The proposed facility will contain a two-bay apparatus floor. The apparatus bay will be accessed by a 44-foot-wide curb cut, while the employee parking area will be accessed by a 22-foot curb cut. FDNY confirms that this structure is commensurate with other new locations they have established and will be suitable for accommodating the growing population of MCB4 and the overall territory expected to be served by this EMS station.

We are encouraged by FDNY's commitment to clean air and look forward to seeing a thorough emissions plan as the building design is finalized. Additionally, MCB4 requests that electric charging stations for both ambulances and staff vehicles be included in the building's design and requests that trees be planted in accordance with NYC Zoning Resolution Section 26-41, and that FDNY produce a Builder's Paving Plan to indicate on site street trees and given the required curb cuts, how many street trees will be planted off site in compliance with zoning.

Unacceptable Delay and Proposed Mitigation

According to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for its Hudson Tunnel Project, Amtrak holds a construction easement on the undeveloped portion of Lot 12 until 2032. As proposed, construction of the proposed EMS station is expected to begin after the easement is extinguished and is anticipated to be completed in 2034. This timeline for

relocation of the current "temporary" and unsuitable EMS station is absolutely unacceptable. MCB4 remains firm: an indoor site that can support the emergency medical needs of the Westside of Manhattan must be secured immediately and is a condition of our approval of the ULURP under review.

Conclusion

Approval of this ULURP, on the condition of an immediate resolution to the outdoor site at West 23rd, will facilitate the relocation and construction of a new facility for EMS Station 7 on Block 675, Lot 12 (part), in the West Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan. MCB4 has argued for this move over the last decade and is ready to partner with you to make it a reality.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair
Manhattan
Community Board 4



Jessica Chait
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use
Committee



Kerry Keenan
Co-Chair
Chelsea Land Use
Committee

- cc: Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Erik Bottcher, City Council
Gateway Development Commission