



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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September 24, 2025

Hon. Eric Adams
Mayor
City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Lisa Bova-Hiatt
Chief Executive Officer
New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)
90 Church Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Chelsea NYCHA Proposed Elliott-Chelsea & Fulton Houses Development

Dear Mayor Adams and Ms. Bova-Hiatt,

The Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea (FEC) NYCHA campuses are, first and foremost, people's homes. Any development must begin with that fact and protect residents' dignity and stability above all else. These campuses are a *significant* part of the Chelsea neighborhood, where long-term residents, families, and senior citizens from low-, moderate- and middle-income households have built a community and are integral to Chelsea's history as a mixed-income, working- and middle-class neighborhood.

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4), at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 3, 2025, voted, by a vote of 29 in favor, 10 opposed, 1 abstaining, and 2 present but not eligible to vote, to not support any of the FEC proposed redevelopment alternatives in their current form.

While a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued for renovation, without any justification, the project scope changed, instead to reflect full demolition. The Draft and Final Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) demonstrated a lack of effort in mitigating impacts and do not proactively consider resident and MCB4 demands.

The absence of successful, consistent, and effective improvements—or even basic maintenance and repair by NYCHA—has left many apartments and the buildings' infrastructure in disrepair. We fully recognize that meaningful and lasting investment must be made. However, any plan that moves forward **must** center on resident concerns and ensure that improvements are both real and sustained.

MCB4 sets forth the following guidance that must govern any new path forward.

Such proposals are not optional, but integral to the success of, and to ensure equity and transparency in, any proposed plan of such magnitude and transformative nature of the NYCHA campuses and the broader Chelsea community.

Essential Commitments to the Chelsea Community

I. Temporary Relocation Plan and Process

A. Protecting Tenant Rights for all Chelsea NYCHA households is a critical part of any proposed plan. The development team must first produce, *in advance of any temporary or permanent relocation*, the following:

1. A written, proposed temporary and/or permanent relocation plan¹ detailing the list of available temporary relocation apartments including exact apartments and numbers of bedrooms. Such relocation plan must spell out the location and timeline of any moves, including any moves from a tenant’s original apartment to a temporary apartment and back to their original apartment or new permanent apartment.
2. A written, proposed temporary relocation agreement that protects and ensures all tenant rights currently under Section 9 and enhanced Section 8 tenants’ rights as already agreed to by NYCHA in the Chelsea Working Group Report. A right of return must be included in such agreement.
3. An agreement to modify such temporary and /or permanent relocation agreements after negotiation with legal counsel of both Tenant Associations and the Legal Aid Society.
4. NYCHA and Related/Essence must include in any relocation agreement that they will pay for all moving expenses, including movers and packers, and utility or other service transfers for any tenant being permanently or temporarily relocated.
5. NYCHA and Related/Essence must agree to protect tenants who live in NYCHA apartments but are not on leases.

¹ The relocation plan as indicated in Chapter 2, Project Alternatives of the FEIS indicates that the relocation plan “will be governed by requirements of applicable Federal, State, and local statutes and regulation,” but does not stipulate nor attach a specific relocation plan or ensure tenant rights and protections as agreed to with NYCHA in the Chelsea NYCHA Working Group Plan.

B. Maintain the agreed upon schedule of repairs as laid out in the Bridge Plan on October 28, 2024.

1. As of June 9th, as reported by Related/Essence, they had closed only 580 of 1,918 (30%) open tickets for in-unit repairs. The PACT Partner must continue to complete in-unit repairs.
2. Related/Essence have been uploading monthly reports on the progress of the Bridge Plan to the FEC website and must continue to do so and disseminate that information.

C. Hold a vote on each campus, conducted and monitored by 3rd party neutral organization, to arrive at consensus on how to proceed with redevelopment. To maximize participation and ensure protection, clear measures must be in place to safeguard individuals throughout the voting process.

The content and format of the ballot must be developed, vetted, and agreed to in advance by both tenant associations.

1. There is a loss of credibility and trust from many NYCHA tenants and the Chelsea community in the original development preference survey. This action needs to be taken to bring clarity to NYCHA tenants' choice on how to proceed. All parties must agree in advance to abide by the results of such a vote.
2. The campuses and their residents have different needs and different positions on the current proposed plans. Prior surveys and petitions indicate the tenant bodies are split on the issue of demolition and replacement vs. renovation. NYCHA, Related/Essence and the West Side elected officials must acknowledge this.
3. If the vote determines that the Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea campuses and their residents have different positions on the current proposed plans, the possibility of developing separate plans for each NYCHA campus must be accepted.

D. NYCHA Maintains Ownership of the Land

NYCHA must maintain ownership of the land to ensure the long-term permanent affordability of the apartments through deed restriction in perpetuity. NYCHA will net-lease the buildings to be operated by Related/Essence.

E. Existing tenant rights and protections

MCB4 underscores that NYCHA and Related/Essence must abide by existing tenant protections and recommendations as set forth in the 2021 Chelsea NYCHA Working Group

Report.² The key tenant protections & rights agreed to and recommended in the Working Group were:

1. Rent & fees: ensure that residents do not see higher rents or non-rent charges because of the PACT conversion, including a maximum Flat Rent (as exists today) for NYCHA tenants whose household income has increased over time.
2. Legal protections: ensure residents have greater, or at minimum the same, legal rights to stay in their homes, and protection against eviction or loss of subsidy.
3. Tenant placement & selection: ensure residents have better, or at least similar, rules when it comes to succession rights, apartment size, entering the development, or requesting to move.
4. Development rules: ensure that residents have meaningful and enforceable rights to participate in decisions made about the development and an opportunity to challenge decisions they propose.

II. Financing

A. Prerequisite for any new housing on the Chelsea NYCHA campuses

New housing must be built first and foremost to support only the budget needs to renovate or construct new Chelsea NYCHA housing, not to meet the budget needs of NYCHA citywide.

B. Excess funds to a Chelsea NYCHA reserve fund

Excess funds raised by new housing that are not immediately needed must be dedicated to a reserve fund primarily for the ongoing operating, maintenance and capital improvements of the Chelsea NYCHA developments

III. New Affordable Housing

A. Any newly constructed non-NYCHA housing should be predominately affordable housing

Any market rate development must include at least 50% affordable housing³ with a range of incomes, not market rate housing.

1. The 50% affordable housing must not include existing NYCHA units. Any new non-NYCHA housing must be affordable across a range of Average Median Income

² Chelsea NYCHA Working Group Report, February 2021, pp. 45-59.

³ As agreed to in the Chelsea NYCHA Working Group plan.

(AMI) tiers from 30% to 125% to equitably include lower- and moderate-income families and ensure that no gaps exist between AMI bands.

2. Affordable housing production must be built before or concurrent with market rate housing construction.
3. Any new housing must respect the scope and scale of the Chelsea NYCHA campuses and the surrounding neighborhood, without a decrease in NYCHA units and should prioritize family-size apartments.

B. Housing integration

1. Any new housing added as part of redevelopment should promote integration between NYCHA tenants, affordable tenants, and market-rate tenants.
2. NYCHA or any new affordable housing must not have separate entrances and facilities and must be fully economically, racially, and ethnically integrated. Affordable apartments must be integrated with market rate apartments.

IV. Chelsea NYCHA Renovation or New Construction

A. No loss of family-sized apartments on the Chelsea NYCHA campuses

The Chelsea NYCHA campuses have a unique number of family-sized apartments, including not only 2- and 3-bedrooms, but uniquely 4- and 5-bedroom apartments for large, extended families. There are no other affordable housing developments in Manhattan Community District 4 (MCD4) with 4- and 5-bedroom apartments.

The current proposed alternatives would create a net loss of 260 bedrooms, which will reduce the number of 3-, 4- and 5-bedroom family sized apartments, resulting in a permanent loss of family sized apartments for community residents.

As part of any renovation or new construction, the numbers of 3-, 4-, and 5-bedroom apartments must be maintained, although they can be redistributed throughout existing or newly proposed buildings.

B. No loss of overall NYCHA residential square footage on the Chelsea NYCHA campuses

As part of any renovation or new construction, the total residential square footage must be maintained, although they can be redistributed throughout existing or newly proposed buildings.

C. NYCHA and Affordable Housing Attributes

1. Tenant amenities – all apartments must have the same amenities. No amenities are to be off-limits to NYCHA and affordable tenants or subject to a fee.

2. Fixtures – all apartments must have the same fixtures (e.g., cabinets, lighting, flooring, and appliances).

V. Community Development Process

A. The entire Chelsea community is part of any proposed redevelopment process

The primary group that should have input are the tenants of the Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea campuses. The larger Chelsea community has a stake in this proposed redevelopment process and should be taken into consideration.

B. Clear up misinformation and ensure transparency and updating of information

There continues to be ongoing misinformation surrounding this project. To ensure clear communication, there must be monthly public meetings with all stakeholders, including the tenants of Fulton and Elliott-Chelsea, members of MCB4, the PTA and school leadership of P.S. 33, and representatives from NYCHA, Related, and Essence to discuss information that changes month to month. Meetings must be on each campus for ease of access for residents, must be at a time when most residents can attend, and must be staffed with translators.

VI. Urban Design

A. Selective demolition should be prioritized over full campus demolition

NYCHA and Related/Essence must demonstrate a good-faith effort to evaluate and pursue preservation or partial redevelopment alternatives. Full demolition should only proceed if retaining most existing housing stock is financially not feasible. No demolition should proceed prior to a new vote conducted on each campus as noted above.

B. Zoning and feasibility requirements

While preserving residential floor area and bedrooms for NYCHA residents, the project must limit increases in FAR to the extent financially feasible. Financial feasibility analyses and planning for lower-density scenarios must be disclosed publicly to ensure transparency and allow for meaningful public review.

C. Building scale and massing

1. The maximum tower height should be 250 feet, consistent with the tallest existing Chelsea NYCHA building.
2. Any new buildings should have street walls and setbacks consistent with R8A zoning between 60 and 105 feet. All massing and zoning should be enforceable and codified, recorded against the land in a deed restriction.

3. On West 17th Street and between 9th and 10th Avenues, at the Fulton campus, at midblock, the 2005 Special West Chelsea District rezoning increased the FAR from 6.02 to 7.5. This area of the Fulton campus is most appropriate for more height where it would be more contextual with buildings along the High Line corridor, and farther from the Chelsea Historic District's low-rise context to the north and east.

D. Historic resource mitigation

1. Contextual architecture must be required, and towers should not be located adjacent to the Chelsea Historic District or across Tenth Avenue from the West Chelsea Historic District.
2. No new construction on the Fulton Campus should be visible above Cushman Row when viewed from the opposite sidewalk of West 20th Street. No towers should be constructed on the Fulton Houses site opposite low-rise historic context on the east side of Ninth Avenue. No towers should be constructed on the Elliott-Chelsea Houses opposite low-rise historic context on the south side of West 25th Street.

E. Façade treatment

Any new buildings should be clad in masonry, brick, or pre-cast panels or screens or a combination thereof, not glass, to reflect and integrate the NYCHA campuses into the surrounding blocks.

VII. Community Facilities

A. Build a new Hudson Guild first

Uninterrupted and continued social and community services for Manhattan Community District 4 must be maintained. Care and attention must be paid to whether Hudson Guild can operate on-site given the ongoing construction if a new facility is built first.

B. Build a new and expanded P.S. 33

Irrespective of demolition and replacement or renovation, the Chelsea community needs a new and expanded P.S. 33 to meet current and future community need. MCB4 calls upon its West Side elected officials to work with the Department of Education to develop a plan to relocate the school temporarily offsite during renovation or new construction to ensure functional and uninterrupted learning environment for all students. (This request is a direct result of the Board's direct experience with the needed temporary relocation of P.S. 51 on West 45th Street during the construction of Gotham West.)

C. Provide new onsite healthcare

Any healthcare facility must be operated by an established not-for-profit healthcare institution which accepts Medicaid and Medicare. The specifics of the facility should match the needs of the NYCHA tenant community.

D. Provide a youth indoor recreational space on the Fulton Campus

Recreational services for Fulton youth are critical to the success of any redevelopment program for Chelsea NYCHA.

E. Community rooms and tenant association spaces

Each campus must have both community rooms and tenant association spaces.

VIII. Open/Green Space

A. All existing and any new open and green spaces must be publicly accessible to NYCHA residents and all members of the community

1. Both campuses currently have publicly accessible open and green spaces including sitting areas, basketball courts, and playgrounds. Public access to these open spaces should be preserved and memorialized through written, enforceable commitments including deed restrictions recorded against the land.
2. The Chelsea NYCHA campuses have mature trees that are 60 to 70 years old. The preservation of these mature trees should be maximized and their loss limited as much as possible.

IX. Public Review Through the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

As has been agreed by NYCHA, the Development Team and West Side elected officials, any Chelsea NYCHA plan must go through the full ULURP process. A project of this scale and magnitude, encompassing large parts of seven city blocks mandates full public review.

X. Binding Assurances

NYCHA and Related/Essence must provide **binding assurances** that they will not abandon, delay, or downscale the project due to market shifts, funding gaps, or internal financial mismanagement. A completion guarantee with substantial financial penalties for non-performance must be established, ensuring long-term accountability. NYCHA and Related Companies must commit to legally binding obligations that ensure the completion of the proposed development regardless of future market fluctuations or internal financial conditions. These obligations should include enforceable safeguards—such as performance bonds, escrow requirements, or deed restrictions—that prevent abandonment, delay, or reduction in scope due to fiscal mismanagement or changes in projected returns. NYCHA

must carry out clear accountability measures to protect public trust, safeguard resident interests, and ensure that deeply affordable housing and site improvements are delivered as promised.

Sincerely,



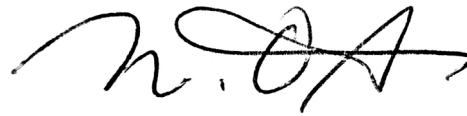
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