



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR**

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**CHRISTINE BERTHET**  
Chair

**JESSE BODINE**  
District Manager

February 13, 2015

Carl Weisbrod, Chair  
City Planning Commission  
22 Reade Street  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: N 150167 ZRY Citywide Stairwells Text Amendment**

Dear Chair Weisbrod:

At the regularly scheduled Board meeting on February 4, 2015, Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) voted by roll call 33 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining and 0 present not eligible to recommend approval of the Citywide Stairwells Text Amendment.

**Description of Proposal**

The Board is grateful to representatives of the Department of City Planning and the Department of Buildings for their presentation of the proposal to its Chelsea Land Use Committee on January 20<sup>th</sup>, and for their thorough answers to questions raised.

The proposed action, initiated by the Department of City Planning, in collaboration with the Department of Buildings and the Fire Department, would amend the Zoning Resolution, Section 12-10 (Definitions) to exempt floor space used for specified safety measures from counting toward zoning floor area in new non-residential buildings greater than 420 feet in height. These measures are intended to improve safety by providing additional exiting capacity for occupants during an emergency requiring full building evacuation.

One of three options may be selected:

- (1) Designate all passenger elevators as "Occupant Self-Evacuation Elevators" with sufficient emergency power to operate simultaneously;
- (2) Increase the required width of all "emergency" exit stairways by 25 percent and designate passenger elevators as "occupant self-evacuation" with emergency power to operate a limited number of elevators simultaneously; or
- (3) Construct one additional "emergency" exit stairway than normally required.

Analyses were conducted on office and hotel buildings with various foot-print sizes. The assessments illustrated that developers of different types and sizes of buildings likely would select different options and that the increases in bulk would be minimal. The typical increase in building height would range from a partial floor to one full floor.

**CB4 Recommendation**

CB4 wholeheartedly supports this proposal. Board members are very familiar with the tragic loss of life from the collapse of the World Trade Center Towers. We appreciate the need for the proposed safety measures. It is our understanding that the proposal was carefully developed over three years in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Department of Buildings, Fire Department, Building Council, engineering experts, unions, and developers.

Sincerely,



Christine Berthet  
Chair



J. Lee Compton  
Co-Chair  
Chelsea Land Use Committee



Betty Mackintosh  
Co-Chair  
Chelsea Land Use Committee

CC: Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer  
NYC Department of Buildings  
Fire Department City of New York