16 February 2024

Mark Levine
Manhattan Borough President
1 Centre Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Borough President Levine:
Pursuant to Section 204(g) of the New York City Charter, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner ("OCME") hereby formally notifies you of the proposed development of a new Manhattan Forensic Pathology Center facility at 425 East 25th Street (Block 962, part of Lot 100) within Manhattan Community District 6 (the "Premises").

The Premises is currently the site of the Hunter College's Brookdale Campus, which includes the Hunter-Bellevue Brookdale Residence and Hunter's School of Health Professions. The New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), in partnership with the City University of New York, Health + Hospitals Corporation, OCME, and New York City Public Schools, and the School Construction Authority, are planning to redevelop the Brookdale Campus with approximately 2.19 million gross square feet (gsf) of academic, health care, life science, and retail space, which includes approximately 156,270 gsf of space for OCME's new facility.

Many of OCME's central functions are currently located at 520 First Avenue. The existing building is roughly 86,000 gross square feet. The building includes the Forensic Pathology Center (FPC), executive offices, forensic autopsy and mortuary space, x-ray/photography facilities, forensic toxicology and anthropology laboratories, and family services offices. The building is also home to the largest forensic pathologist training program in the world, which serves as a pipeline for future medical examiners. In 2007, OCME opened the OCME Charles S. Hirsch Center for Forensic Sciences Building ("Hirsch Center Building") at 421 East 26th Street, across from the existing Brookdale campus. This building houses the Forensic Biology laboratory, the Molecular Genetics laboratory, Histology Laboratory, Medicolegal Investigations, the agency-wide Operations Center, OCME's administrative units, medical examiner and medicolegal training facilities, training laboratories, emergency mass fatality operations laboratory, and evidence facilities.

The existing 520 First Avenue facility is over a half century old and is well past its useful life. The building was never intended to serve as a laboratory. Moreover, the building's age and current state pose insurmountable challenges in maintaining the high quality and technologically advanced work that the OCME is expected to conduct at the facility as a national leader in forensic science.

OCME considered several alternative locations for the FPC. OCME's goals were to consolidate all Manhattan operations in one facility or within the same block and address the issue of poor building condition for the FPC. Criteria considered included proximity, time until occupancy, availability of land, appropriateness of the future space, and cost. OCME investigated temporarily relocating the FPC to another borough's location to redevelop and rehabilitate the 520 First Avenue building, however, this option was not feasible due to lack of funds, and temporarily relocating the facility would have significantly and negatively impacted the efficiency for the FPC

and overall OCME operations. Additionally, the 520 Building is further from the agency's administrative headquarters at 421 East 26th St than the proposed Brookdale site, which is next door. OCME also investigated relocating the FPC to a new building on the site of Bellevue's current staff parking facility in order to be adjacent to the Hirsch Building but was informed the parking facility was not available for this purpose. Finally, OCME evaluated the possibility of relocating to the future Brookdale site. This option would provide materially closer proximity to the Hirsch Center Building and the use would be compatible with the proposed life sciences uses of the redevelopment of the Brookdale Campus.

There are no costs involved in the site acquisition, as the land is City-owned. The size of the development parcels is appropriate to accommodate the future facility.

NYCEDC is submitting the Land Use application necessary and CEQR environmental review together with co-applicant the Department of Citywide Administrative Services with OCME as an involved party.

The Citywide Statement of Needs for Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024 did not include the proposed Manhattan Forensic Pathology Center. However, the proposed development is not inconsistent with the Statement of Needs.

In the interest of expeditious certification of this project by the New York City Department of City Planning, we would greatly appreciate your concurrence with the choice of this site. We would appreciate a waiver of the thirty-day comment period so the ULURP can be certified as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Very Truly,

Robert D. Van Pelt, Esq.
Chief of Staff, Office of Chief Medical Examiner

cc: Christian Grove, DCAS
Amy Jin, NYCEDC