DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
CITY OF NEW YORK

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW DIVISION

Amanda M. Burden, FAICP, *Director*
Department of City Planning

April 22, 2011

Robert Kulikowski, Director
New York City Office of Environmental Coordination
253 Broadway, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10007

NOTICE OF LEAD AGENCY DETERMINATION AND REVIEW

Re: NYU Core
CEQR No. 11DCP121M
ULURP No. Pending
Manhattan, Community District 2
Type I Action

Dr. Kulikowski:

The above-referenced application involves discretionary actions subject to City Planning Commission (CPC) approval. These actions are subject to review under City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR), Executive Order No. 91, and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), 6 NYCRR 617.

Pursuant to Sections 5.03 and 5.05 of the Rules of Procedure for City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) as adopted June 26, 1991, the Department of City Planning, acting on behalf of the CPC, is assuming lead agency status for this application and is initiating the CEQR review. The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY), the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) and the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) will be involved agencies.

The applicant, New York University (NYU), is seeking a number of discretionary actions (the "Proposed Actions") in connection with a proposed expansion of NYU facilities at NYU's academic core near Washington Square in Manhattan, Community District 2. The project area for the Proposed Actions includes: a "Proposed Development Area," bounded by LaGuardia Place to the west, Mercer Street to the east, West Houston Street to the

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south, and West Third Street to the north,[1] where substantial new development is proposed on two superblocks as part of NYU's master plan; a "Commercial Overlay Area," bounded by Washington Square East and University Place to the west, Mercer Street to the east, West Fourth Street to the south, and the northern boundary of the existing R7-2 zoning district near East 8th Street to the north,[2] where the Proposed Actions would permit greater flexibility in ground-floor retail uses, and are expected to result in limited conversion of ground-floor uses in existing buildings to retail use; and a "Block 535 Demapping Area," where no new development is proposed, but where NYU seeks to acquire the property that contains its 251 Mercer Street cogeneration facility below-grade.

The proposed actions would facilitate a proposal by the applicant to construct the following developments in the Proposed Development Area, over approximately 19 years:

- Four new NYU buildings that would include academic uses, residential units for NYU faculty and students, a new athletic facility, a possible University-oriented hotel with ancillary conference/academic space, and retail uses;
- A below-grade academic use spanning the distance between LaGuardia Street and Mercer Streets;
- Approximately four acres of publicly accessible open space;
- An approximately 30,000-gsf temporary gymnasium, which would operate until the opening of the proposed new athletic center;
- Below-grade replacement parking facilities; and
- NYU anticipates making space available to the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) for the provision of an approximately 100,000-square-foot public school.

By 2031, the Proposed Actions would result in the development of approximately 2.5 million gross square feet (gsf) of new uses in the Proposed Development Area. Within the Commercial Overlay Area, it is anticipated that NYU would develop up to approximately 24,000 gsf of neighborhood retail uses in the ground floors of five NYU buildings.

The Proposed Development Area – bounded by LaGuardia Place to the west, Mercer Street to the east, West Houston Street to the south, and West Third Street to the north – is comprised of two superblocks separated by Bleecker Street. The superblock north of Bleecker Street in the Proposed Development Area is referred to as the "North Block," while the superblock south of Bleecker is referred to as the "South Block." Collectively, the North and South Blocks are largely residential in character, with mid- to high-rise apartment buildings, a number of private and public open spaces, and the Coles Sports and Recreation Center, which is an NYU gymnasium/recreational facility. The Proposed Development Area also contains a number of retail uses located along LaGuardia Place, including the Morton-Williams Associated Supermarket.

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[1] The Proposed Development Area includes: Block 524, Lots 1, 9, and 66; Block 533, Lots 1 and 10; and portions of Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place that are proposed to be demapped.

[2] The Commercial Overlay Area includes: Block 546, Lots 1, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 20, 21, 26, 30; Block 547, Lots 1, 4, 5, 8, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, and 25; and Block 548, Lots 1, 4, 21, 24, 40, and 45.

The Proposed Actions required to facilitate the proposed project are as follows:

- **Zoning map change**: The entire project area is currently zoned R7-2. There is a C1-5 overlay along LaGuardia Street on the two superblocks in the Proposed Development Area, but this is the only location where retail is allowed in the project area (this overlay area contains the Morton Williams Associated Supermarket and the LaGuardia Retail building). NYU proposes to rezone the Proposed Development Area from R7-2 and R7-2/C1-5 to C1-7, and proposes to rezone the Commercial Overlay Area from R7-2 to R7-2/C1-5.
- **Large-Scale General Development (LSGD) Special Permit**:
  - Pursuit of waivers within a proposed LSGD to include the North and South Blocks. The precise boundaries of the LSGD on the South Block are subject to adjustment in order to conform to the scope of the Proposed Actions. As a consequence of this Proposed Action, the existing Large Scale Residential Development (LSRD) would be dissolved, with the existing waiver(s) incorporated into the new LSGD special permit.
  - Additional waivers and/or Zoning Resolution text amendments (may include height and setback waivers and potentially floor area and open space redistribution across zoning lot boundary lines, and court and location of use regulations).
- **Demapping and City disposition of portions of the following City streets:**
  - LaGuardia Place between Bleecker and West Third Streets;
  - Mercer Street between Houston and Bleecker Streets;
  - Mercer Street between Bleecker and West Third Streets; and
  - Mercer Street between West Third and West Fourth Streets.
- **Elimination of New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Deed Restrictions on Blocks 524 and 533**
- **Potential funding or financing approvals from the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY)**
- **Public Authorities Law Site Selection by the New York City School Construction Authority (SCA)**
- **New York City Department of Transportation revocable consent for utility lines beneath City streets**

In addition to the above-described Proposed Actions, on March 3, 2011 NYU submitted an application to the New York City Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) for a Certificate of Appropriateness (CofA) for proposed changes to landscaping at University Village, which is a New York City Landmark (NYCL). At a public hearing on April 5, 2011, LPC approved the proposed landscape changes.

For the purposes of the analysis, there are two analysis years – the first is 2021, at which point approximately half of the total development (approximately 1.3 million gsf) is expected to be constructed and operational. The second analysis year is 2031, when the entire proposed development program is expected to be complete. The applicant has stated that absent the proposed actions, in 2021 there would be no new development within the

Proposed Development Area. Within the Commercial Overlay Area, with or without the Proposed Actions, NYU plans to develop an additional 20,000 gsf of academic uses at 25 West Fourth Street. Also within the Commercial Overlay Area at 15 Washington Place, NYU plans a renovation and building addition that would convert the approximately 74,000-gsf residential building into a 129,000-sf academic building. The future condition without the Proposed Actions in 2031 assumes that the site of the existing Morton Williams supermarket would be redeveloped as-of-right and would contain an approximately 25,000-square-foot supermarket and NYU academic space.

Construction of the proposed project would commence in 2013, contingent upon approval of the proposed discretionary actions, and would last approximately 19 years.

If you have any questions regarding this application, please contact the Project Manager, Diane McCarthy, at (212) 720-3417.

Sincerely,

Robert Dobruskin

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Environmental Assessment and Review Division
New York City Department of City Planning

cc: The Hon. Scott M. Stringer,
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