



BOROUGH PRESIDENT CITY COUNCIL

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

NOV. 27, 2018

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JOINT LETTER TO MAYOR DE BLASIO FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS REGARDING TWO BRIDGES DEVELOPMENT

In response to the Department of City Planning's staff-level decision to classify the Two Bridges development as a "minor modification" thereby forgoing the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), which would have required City Council approval, U.S. Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, Council Member Margaret S. Chin, state Senator Brian Kavanagh, and Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou issued the following letter:

Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall, New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

In the Two Bridges neighborhood, developers have proposed four towers that would result in 2,775 new apartments on one city block. The Department of City Planning (DCP) made a staff-level determination that these developments only required a "minor modification" of the existing Large Scale Residential Development and therefore, in their view, did not need to go through the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), which would have required City Council approval. We have long disagreed with DCP's determination. This "minor modification" is being reviewed by the City Planning Commission (CPC).

Development of this scale without ULURP is unconscionable; this is equivalent to a full neighborhood rezoning on the scale of East New York or Inwood without public engagement, without sufficient capital investments, and without tenant protections. There is no precedent where similarly sized projects were advanced through a minor modification. This represents a departure



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from established norms and the impact of these developments on this one block will be disastrous to the community.

In response, Borough President Gale Brewer and Council Member Margaret Chin submitted a land use application in January 2018 to amend the Zoning Resolution to require developments in the former Two Bridges Urban Renewal Area to obtain a special permit, which would require ULURP. In May 2018, their staff met with DCP to discuss their proposed zoning text amendment. It was agreed in that meeting that an environmental assessment statement (EAS) would be needed. Staff drafted the EAS based on instructions received from DCP at that meeting and via subsequent communications. Council Member Chin and Borough President Brewer submitted the draft EAS and text amendment in August 2018. DCP then informed them that they wanted a completely different EAS than what had been agreed upon. This directly contradicts prior DCP guidance, is entirely unnecessary, and would be a waste of taxpayer resources.

The application is complete as submitted. We request that DCP accept the EAS and refer the application out for public review. We also request that CPC not vote on the “minor modification” until after the public hearing for the text amendment application. We would like to remind you that all five of us testified in favor of ULURP and against the minor modification at the CPC public hearing on the developers’ proposals. This needs your immediate attention, as CPC may vote on the “minor modification” as soon as November 14th.

Gale A. Brewer
Manhattan Borough President
District

Council Member Margaret Chin
1st Council District

Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez
7th NY Congressional

State Senator Brian Kavanagh
26th Senate District

Assembly Member Yuh-Line Niou
65th Assembly District