



## THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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# ***‘NOT A DONE DEAL’: CM CHIN & BP BREWER STAND WITH COMMUNITY TO FIGHT TWO BRIDGES MEGA-TOWERS***

***Elected officials come together to announce new effort to force Administration to commit to transparency and real public review, including a City Council vote through ULURP***



TWO BRIDGES - Today, Council Member Margaret S. Chin and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer joined elected officials and members of the Two Bridges community to inaugurate a new chapter in the fight against three proposed mega-developments that threaten the fabric of this low-income neighborhood.

“These monstrous mega towers are not a done deal,” said **Council Member Chin**. “Should the City Planning Commission rule against this community by green-lighting

these proposed towers without any real public input, I will use every tool at my disposal to challenge that decision, even legal action against the Administration. These developments pose an existential threat to this neighborhood, which has been a haven for low-income people of every race, religion and ethnic background for decades. We

are here today to say that we will never surrender this area to out-of-control development that will radically alter the character of Two Bridges. To my friends and neighbors who are deeply concerned about the future of their community, I assure you that we have only just begun to fight.”

“The Two Bridges community deserves a real review of these projects, which could bring more new development all at once than this entire neighborhood has seen in 30 years,” said **Manhattan Borough President Brewer**. “The decision that put these towers on the path to approval without a ULURP review was wrong, and we will fight for the transparency, the input, and the protection Two Bridges residents are owed.”

In July 2016, Council Member Chin joined Borough President Brewer to urge the Department of City Planning to consider the proposed Two Bridges developments subject to the city’s Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, which would involve a full public review from the Community Board and Borough President and a vote in the City Council. The Department rebuffed this request, selecting a far less rigorous review process for the proposed developments. At today’s press conference, Brewer and Chin reiterated their belief that the Department of City Planning’s initial determination was wrong and stated that they are considering every possible remedy to protect the Two Bridges neighborhood, even legal action.

The joint announcement was made Friday in front of 80 Rutgers Slip, a building that houses over 100 low-income seniors. One of the proposed towers will be built on top of this 10-story building, forcing an unknown number of seniors from their homes. In February, Chin and Brewer blasted the owners of the property, the Two Bridges Neighborhood Council and Settlement Housing Fund, for attempting to reach a secret agreement with HUD to displace those seniors to clear the way for luxury development.

“Our communities must have input on new developments, especially those that could change the character of a neighborhood and displace older and low-income New Yorkers,” said **Public Advocate Letitia James**. “We will not allow back-door deals to be made at the expense of our residents. The ULURP process exists for this very reason, and I thank Council Member Chin and Borough President Brewer for pushing to ensure the concerns of the community are taken into account.”

“I continue to stand with the Lower East Side community in opposing the proposed luxury towers along the Two Bridges waterfront,” said **Assembly Member Yuh-Line Niou**. “They are out of context, and do not address the dire need for affordable housing in lower Manhattan. It is critical that the City listen to our concerns and work to reject these towers. I commend my colleagues and neighborhood leaders for their ongoing advocacy, and I look forward to partnering with them as we work to preserve our Lower East Side community.”

“The massive development proposals in the Two Bridges neighborhood would come with massive impact on the community -- and yet the community's role is massively

insufficient," said **State Senator Daniel Squadron**. "The comprehensive impacts of these proposals must be considered, and the community must have a real and meaningful role."

"Community Board 3 believes the proposed developments are out of context with the Two Bridges neighborhood and will have a severe impact on affordability and fabric of the community," said **Jamie Rogers, Chair of Manhattan Community Board 3**.

"We are here today to say, to the developers of these mega towers and to the City Planning Commission: our community will hold you accountable," said **Melanie Wang, Chinatown Tenants Union Organizer at CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities**. "These developments could drastically accelerate gentrification and displacement pressures in our neighborhood, and so, it is imperative that they are subject to thorough public review. CAAAV applauds Council Member Chin, Borough President Brewer, and the Two Bridges community for taking this step toward that goal. Chinatown and the Lower East Side need community-led development processes that put the interests of our working-class, immigrant and minority community first, and we will continue to work together to create those processes for Two Bridges and beyond."

"The Department of City Planning is obligated to uphold zoning resolution procedures and commit to transparency," said **Damaris Reyes, Executive Director of GOLES**. "We will continue to fight until the department is held accountable and the community is protected from overzealous developers."

"We stand together with our elected officials and fiercely reject the notion that 'there is nothing that can be done' and that we must readily accept these completely out of context proposals," said **Trever Holland, President of the Two Bridges Towers Tenant Association**. "The City must do the right thing and reject these so-called 'minor modifications' and review these projects through a proper and transparent full ULURP. Additionally, the City can support our community supported zoning proposal for the waterfront, which allows for contextual development and mandatory affordable housing. We understand the need for affordable housing, but adding almost the same number of units as Hudson Yards to a two block area without a full public review is simply not acceptable."

"Residents of the Two Bridges community by and large feel that these proposed developments are too large, out of context and constitute an overwhelming transformation of our community," said **Marc Richardson, Vice President of Lands End One Tenant Association**. "This transformation which would involve more than doubling the number of overall units in the affected 2 block area will have at least 75% of those units targeted to more affluent residents. We do not believe at a minimum the city should grant any modification that would allow in any measure, development to exceed what is already allowed. In fact, we believe current zoning should be changed to ensure our community can be preserved and protected as an affordable, working class community. We expect our elected representatives and public

servants to do all in their power to fight for the interests of the Two Bridges community.”