



October 30, 2002

Hon. Amanda Burden  
Chair, New York City Planning Commission  
22 Reade Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Burden,

As you know, we are extremely concerned about the effect that the current community facility allowance has on the communities we represent and serve. The Kimmel Center rising on Washington Square South in many ways epitomizes the problems with the current community facility allowance – the increased size of the building blocks the view through Washington Square Arch, shadows Washington Square Park, looms over the low-rise South Village, and bears no relationship to its landmark surroundings.

We have therefore been extremely encouraged by indications that the Department of City Planning is considering changing the community facility allowance to address some of these issues, and were also extremely encouraged by your comments in this Sunday's New York Times acknowledging the enormous visual impact of the Kimmel Center. However, we are concerned that current indications, as we understand them, are that the Department will only be working on reforms to regulations regarding religious institutions and medical facilities in low-density neighborhoods. While we do not deny the importance of these issues, we believe that it is imperative that the long-standing issues of the concentration of very large community facilities in certain districts such as Manhattan's Community Boards 2 and 3, and the enormous size of the additional community facility allowance in certain zoning districts such as R6 and R7 districts, must be addressed soon as well.

We would very much like to begin a conversation with you about how to design and achieve such reforms. We hope you share our sense of the current deficiencies in the zoning system in this regard, their unplanned and detrimental impact upon neighborhoods like Greenwich Village and the East Village, and the need for expeditious reform.

We look forward to hearing back from you, and look forward to working with you and the Department on this issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Alan Jay Gerson<sup>th</sup>  
Council Member

  
Christine Quinn  
Council Member

  
Margarita Lopez  
Council Member

  
Andrew Berman  
Executive Director, Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

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Established in 1989 to protect the  
cultural and architectural heritage  
of Greenwich Village