



Greenwich
Village
Society for
Historic
Preservation

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May 19, 2014

Hon. Madelyn Wils, President
Hudson River Park Trust
353 West Street
Pier 40, 2nd floor
New York, NY 10007

Re: Pier 40 Air Rights and St. John's Building

Dear President Wils,

On behalf of the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (GVSHP), the largest membership organization in Greenwich Village, I write to express my extreme concern about recently announced plans to sell the air rights from Pier 40 for use at the St. John's Terminal Building through what sounds, from press reports, to be a State General Project Plan.

As you know, from the first announcement of the Trust's intention to seek permission to sell air rights from the Hudson River Park, GVSHP and several other West Side community groups have communicated our serious misgivings about any air rights transfers taking place via a General Project Plan (see attached letter). Such a mechanism allows the directly-affected communities the least opportunity to influence the outcome of the process, as approval of only the Governor, Assembly Speaker, and State Senate Majority Leader is required.

The recent public announcement that "Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's administration *and park officials* (emphasis added) have struck a tentative agreement with a developer to transfer unused development rights from" Pier 40 to the St. John's Building is especially troubling because in recent public forums you have repeatedly stated that no deal or arrangement to allow the transfer of air rights was imminent, and that a long, public, New York City Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process which would give local elected officials a say in determining the outcome would be required before any action was taken. While we have repeatedly expressed misgivings about the ULURP process as a means of selling air rights from the park, such a process is nevertheless vastly preferable to the State General Project Plan process, in that it at least allows local elected officials some direct role in the outcome, as the approval of the City Council is required.

The process of legislatively allowing the possibility of air right transfers from the Hudson River Park to enable increased development inland began with little or no public consultation or involvement – a fact of which we have been quite critical. The process appears to be continuing to move forward in a similar manner, which would allow the public, and especially the most directly affected communities, minimal say in determining the outcome. This runs contrary not only to the overwhelming sentiment expressed by

the affected public about this issue, but promises which you and other public officials have made regarding how this process would advance.

Sincerely,



Andrew Berman
Executive Director

cc: Governor Andrew Cuomo
Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver
Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos
Mayor Bill de Blasio
Public Advocate Tish James
City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer
State Senator Brad Hoylman
State Assemblymember Deborah Glick
State Assemblymember Richard Gottfried
City Councilmember Corey Johnson
City Councilmember Margaret Chin
Carl Weisbrod, Chair, NY City Planning Commission
Hudson River Park Trust Board
Hudson River Park Trust Community Advisory Board
Community Boards 1,2, and 4, Manhattan
Friends of Hudson River Park
Save Chelsea
Greenwich Village Community Task Force
Council of Chelsea Block Associations
Greenwich Village Block Associations
Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association
Tribeca Trust
Village Independent Democrats
Lower Chelsea Alliance
Village Reform Democratic Club
Charles Street Association
Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
Charlton Street Block Association
VanDam Street Block Association
West 12th Street Block Association
Morton Street Block Association
West 13th Street 100 Block Association
West 16th Street 100 Block Association
Morton Street Block Association
Perry Street Block Association

Perry Street Crusaders
Chelsea Reform Democratic Club
Chelsea Midtown Democrats
Washington Place Block Association
West 44th Street Better Block Association/Friends of Pier 84
Barry Benepe



gvshp

Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
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Save Chelsea
Old Chelsea Station, PO Box 1315
New York, NY 10113-1315



Council of Chelsea Block Associations
145 West 17th Street, #3W
New York, NY 10011

**Greenwich Village
Community
Task Force**

c/o 92 Horatio Street, #5-1
New York, NY 10014

October 31, 2013

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor, State of New York
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: Assembly Bill 8031/Senate Bill 5824, the Hudson River Park Bill, and allowance for transfer of development rights to inland communities

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We write to you because we are extremely concerned and deeply troubled by the provision allowing the transfer of air rights from the Hudson River Park for use one block inland in A.8031/S.5824, which was recently passed by the New York State legislature. We believe that this may open up the possibility of completely inappropriate and out-of-scale development along our waterfront, which would be deeply damaging to our neighborhoods.

We are particularly troubled by the possibility that the use of air rights from piers within the Hudson River Park might be authorized by a New York State General Project Plan (GPP). Such a process gives representatives of the local affected communities no say over or and no vote upon the final agreement, thus maximizing the possibility of an outcome which would run contrary to the wishes and interests of our neighborhoods. The alternative vehicle for authorizing the use of air rights, a New York City Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), also offers no guarantees of meaningful input from the affected communities or leverage over the outcome. But a GPP places the decision-making process even further away from those who would be most affected by it, thus making the likelihood of a troubling and problematic outcome from any sale of air rights even greater.

We strongly urge you to consider these concerns before taking any action that would allow or facilitate the transfer of air rights from the Hudson River Park for development inland.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berman, Executive Director
Greenwich Village Society
for Historic Preservation

Lesley Doyel, Co-President
Save Chelsea

Bill Borock, President
Council of Chelsea Block Associations

Zack Winestine, Co-Chair
Greenwich Village Community Task Force

Cc: Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver
Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos
City Council Speaker Christine Quinn
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer
State Senator Brad Hoylman
State Senator Adriano Espaillat
State Senator Daniel Squadron
Assemblymember Deborah Glick
Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried
Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal
City Councilmember Margaret Chin
City Councilmember Gale Brewer
City Councilmember-elect Corey Johnson
Madelyn Wils, Hudson River Park Trust
Amanda Burden, Department of City Planning
Community Board #2, Manhattan
Community Board #4, Manhattan
community groups