

Coalition for a Livable West Side

Vol. 20, issue 1

March-April 2006

www.livablenewyork.org

email:livablenewyork@erols.com

Critical Overdevelopment Issues On The West Side

Jo Jordan

We deeply mourn the sudden passing of our dear friend, colleague and esteemed long-time secretary of the Coalition for a Livable West Side, Jo Jordan. Jo was an inspiration to all who knew her. Her enthusiasm for life and music and her fierce commitment to the causes of social justice were legendary. She will be dearly missed.

This issue is primarily about development in the Community Board 7 area - West 59th Street to West 110th Street - and the appalling lack of coordination between the NYC Department of Building, Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Protection. We find it alarming that less than half of one percent of the new units will be affordable housing.

Also, look at the development that is taking place, almost simultaneously, from West 59th to West 65th Street, West End Avenue to Amsterdam Avenue. Note the construction activity on West 59th - West 61st Street, between West End Avenue and Amsterdam Avenue. (See page 2 and 3).

Havoc was caused on Broadway and West 64th Street during the lengthy construction of the Glenwood building. Construction equipment and huge supply trucks blocked the flow of traffic on the avenues and side streets. Traffic was a nightmare. Buses crawled. The danger to pedestrians was enormous.

Who in the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) will address the issue of traffic gridlock? Who in the NYC Buildings Department (DOB) will not only monitor construction violations but ensure that the companies comply with all regulations. We have found that construction companies simply absorb the fines and continue to violate the law. Who in the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will monitor noise and air pollution, and the major problem of rats that surface as a result of the construction?

Residents at 101, 55 and 75 WEA have first-hand knowledge of the rat problem created during the construction of 1 and 33 WEA on the Riverside South site (W. 61st-W. 62nd St.). With all the new construction, the rat problem will be frightening.

When will DEP address the issue of true capacity at the North River sewage Treatment Plant in Harlem?

On, appropriately, April Fool's Day in 1994, the sewage figures magically went down when 24 million gallons of raw sewage simply disappeared from the plant in just two hours - the equivalent of losing sewage from over 60,000 residents.

The low figures are truly suspect at the plant, which has had an abysmal history in terms of exceeding its permit discharge levels - dumping raw sewage into the Hudson River.

How could the figures remain low given the enormous amount of residential and office construction in the North River Plant's catchment area? [See page 4]

When NYC DOT Has the 72nd Off Ramp Demolished You Will Get Nightmare Traffic on a 7-Lane West End Avenue [West 57th to West 70th Street]



More on Page 6

What's Inside

Development Sites	P. 2,3
CB7's Critique of Fordham Plan	P. 4
City to Keep Dumping Sewage	P. 4
200 WEA	P. 5
Amsterdam (W. 67th-W. 69th St.)	P. 5
Lincoln Square Synagogue	P. 5
Membership Tear-off	P. 5
Ramp Demolition, City Rolling Dice in Favor of Developers	P. 6

Massive Construction in This Small Area

College Expansions

John Jay College
W. 58th -W. 59th St - 11th Ave.
620,000-sq. ft. expansion

Fordham University [See p. 4]

W. 60th - W. 62nd Street
Amsterdam to Columbus Ave.
2.378 million sq ft.

Under Construction

W. 59th - W. 60th St., WEA
WEA - Amsterdam Ave,
557 W. 59th Street
31 floors./350 feet/195 condos

Under construction

555 W. 59th Street
W. 59th - W. 60th St
35 floors/350 feet
200 Condos/5 Townhouses

Under construction

1 West End Avenue
W. 61st-W. 62nd St.
Freedom Place South
25 floors/293 feet
211 rental apartments
Half "affordable"

Under construction

33 West End Avenue
W. 61st-W. 62nd St.
13 floors/150 feet
120- studio apts.
Subsidized Sr. Housing

Under Construction

225 West 60th Street
WEA - Amsterdam Ave
18 floors/195 feet
80 Condos/Tuoro College

Planned

245 West 60th Street
W. 60th - W. 61st Street
WEA - Amsterdam Ave
300 rentals/41 condos
261-car garage

Planned

227 W. 61st St
Amsterdam and WEA
Residential building

More Development

Planned Rehab

59th Street Rec. Center
533 West 59th Street
WEA - Amsterdam Ave.

Soft/Development Sites

John Jay College North Hall
437 W. 59th Street
Between 9th-10th Ave
and

211 W. 61st Street
242 West 61st Street
244 West 61st Street
246-50 West 61st Street
252 West 61st Street

Between Amsterdam and WEA

1845 Broadway

Between W. 60th - W. 61st St.

1881 Broadway

Between W. 62nd St - W. 63rd St.

2180 Broadway

SE corner of W. 77th Street

Soft/Development Site

80-94 West End Avenue
W. 63rd to W. 64th Street
Site is for sale to developer

Under construction

15 CPW

20 floors/230 feet

1 W. 61st St.; 2 W. 62nd St.

43 floors/550 feet

W. 61st-W. 62nd St.

Broadway - CPW

202 condos/29 suites

5-story retail base -B'way

Riverside South Under construction

The Avery
100 Riverside Boulevard
W. 64th-W. 65th St.
30 floors/344 feet
271 condominiums
49 parking spaces

Planned

80 Riverside Boulevard
W. 62nd- W. 63rd St.
41 floors/425 feet
289 condominiums
75,000 sq ft -parking

Planned

60 Riverside Boulevard
W. 62nd- W. 63rd St.
Tower 1/Tower 2
40 Riverside Boulevard
W. 61st- W. 62nd St.
Building 1/Building 2
20 Riverside Boulevard
W. 60th- W. 61st St..
10 Riverside Boulevard

Conversions

Radisson/Empire Hotel
44 W. 63rd Street
W. 62nd-W. 63rd Street
Broadway-Columbus Ave.
125 condominiums

2112 Broadway

Landmarked Apple Bank Building
27 Condominiums



*"Sure we need affordable housing - just so long as it
doesn't come at the expense of unaffordable housing."
Dana F.*

And Still More Development

Reconstruction

Lincoln Center - West 65th Street

Broadway - Amsterdam Avenue

Renovating street and space in
Lincoln Center campus.
Work to begin shortly.

Planned

ABC Studio Expansion

Received City Tax Break to add
279,918 sq ft. of studio space
125 WEA , 320 W. 66th Street
Kept Tax Break/Never Expanded

Planned

Red Cross Building

150 Amsterdam Avenue

Amsterdam and W. 66th Street
Residential tower

Planned [See p. 5]

166-188 Amsterdam

W. 67th -W. 69th Street

Planned

211 Columbus Avenue

Historic District
Mixed-use building

Planned [See p. 5]

200 West End Avenue

W. 70th-W. 69th Street

Development Site [See p. 5]

Lincoln Square Synagogue

208 Amsterdam Avenue

Planned By

Shearith Israel Synagogue

18 W. 70th Street

CPW-Columbus Avenue

Planned

Demolition completed

120-122 W. 72nd Street

15 floors/172 feet
27 condominiums

Planned

Demolition to begin

2075 Broadway

W. 72nd St. SW corner

19 floors

Retail space [49,478 sq ft]

Condominium space [9,078sq.ft.]

Occupancy early 2008

Planned

West Park Church

165 W. 86th Street

Possible 23-story condominium

With new church

Under construction

Demolition not completed

300 W. 86th St.; 537 WEA;

535 WEA ; 533 WEA

21 story Condominium

Under Construction

148 W. 90th St

Amsterdam and Columbus Ave.

12 floors

K-8 Stephen Gaynor School

Ballet Hispanico

Site Addition

210 W. 91st Street

Broadway-Amsterdam Avenue

19 floors

47 condominiums

Site Addition

201 W. 92nd St.

200 W. 93rd St.

Adding condos on roof

Under Construction

250 W. 93rd Street

20 floors/210 feet

143 rental Apartments

Planned

303-315 W. 96th St

WEA-Riverside Drive

Condominiums

Planned

2612 Broadway

W. 98th - W. 99th Street

SRO Housing

136 units

Homeless /disabled people

Under construction

245 W. 99th Street

2633 Broadway

31 floors

73 condominiums

Under construction

2628 Broadway

37 floors

64 condominiums

Congregation Shearith Israel

At press time, no decision had been made by the New York City Landmark's Preservation Commission on the Congregation's very controversial plan to construct an 11-story (124-foot) building at 18 West 70th Street adjacent to the Landmarked Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in this Central Park West Historic District.

If approved, it would be a blatant example of "spot zoning", ie., the changing the existing zoning for a specific building or project.. In this case, the contextual mid-block zoning, designed to protect the block's low-scale character, would be violated.

We will keep you informed.

continued from page 1

The City does not really know how much residential and commercial space has been built in the catchment area.. Therefore the Coalition is updating its development database to include everything that has been built in the North River's plant catchment area since the 1994 April Fools Day miracle of the disappearing 24 millions gallons of raw sewage We hope to have it completed by June 2006. The database will then be used to ascertain water usage in the catchment area.

Community Board 7's Critique of the Fordham University Expansion Plan

On December 29, 2005, Community Board 7 sent a brilliant analysis of the Fordham University expansion plan to the Hon. Amanda Burden, Chairperson New York City Planning Commission. Their full letter can be seen at <http://www.cb7.org>.

Excerpts follow:

"...Fordham has proposed a development which, in its individual components, and more importantly, as an ensemble, is overwhelming in scale. The site will not accommodate what Fordham wishes to do."

"...Fordham acquired its site following the city's exercise of its powers of eminent domain. *Construction on the site was dependent upon the eviction on thousands of tenants who resided there.* The underlying rationale was that the educational goals of Fordham justified the hardship entailed in clearing the site. For more than forty years a substantial portion of the site has been warehoused and has not been used for educational or any other purposes.

"Fordham has apparently concluded that it will never need to use the sites it proposes to sell off. Many in the

community believe that, if Fordham cannot use the land, it should be reacquired by the city and dedicated to educational use. Anything less, it is argued, would be a betrayal of those former residents who were forcibly dispossessed.

"The ethical issue is compounded by the apparent fact that the only way Fordham can afford the overly massive structures it proposes for the remainder of the site is to sell off a portion of this land made available to it only through the draconian powers of eminent domain.

"Conclusion: ...Given that Fordham received this property at nominal cost to itself and at great cost to those who sacrificed their homes to make it possible, the very least Fordham can do is to attempt to be a good neighbor.

"Community Board 7 respectfully suggests that this project is not ready for certification. ... The time has come to re-order Fordham's priorities and to redesign a university campus that does not turn its back on the community."

Respectfully yours,

Sheldon J. Fine, Chairman,

Richard Ashe, Page Cowley, Co-chairs, Land Use Committee

The City To Keep Dumping 140 Million Gallons of Raw Sewage Daily Into NY Waterways

The following is an excerpt from testimony at a DEC Hearing on 9/17/93 by Reed Super, Sr. Attorney, Riverkeeper: "The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has the responsibility to implement the Clean Water Act's permitting and enforcement schemes for improving and maintaining water quality. But when it comes to New York City sewage, DEC's regulation and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) compliance has been severely lacking for more than a decade even though it is DEC's responsibility to ensure compliance with these measures

"...While 40 billion gallons of untreated combined sewage and stormwater currently spill each year – Combine Sewer Overflow (CSO), the problem may get worse. The City plans to redevelop large areas within the 5 boroughs, including the far West Side of Midtown Manhattan; Lower Manhattan, And countless other, smaller development projects will be completed in coming years. Each of those projects has the potential to increase the volume of sewage and stormwater entering the combined system ... Now that DEC has finally gotten around to a full technical review of the City's Clean Water Act permits, this is the time – indeed, it is long overdue – to require implementation of a comprehensive long term CSO control and abatement plan, which is effective, legally-adequate, and enforceable, and which will fully meet water quality standards in a reasonable time frame."

Wasted words! Here's what the Village Voice (12/20/05) reported: "Last October's days of torrential downpour resulted in the dumping of thousands of gallons of raw sewage into New York City's many waterways. But this spillage wasn't a freak accident. Every week, raw sewage pours into the city's rivers, estuaries, and ocean. And those responsible are not going to clean up their act; they are just changing the rules...A deal between the state and city of New York lowered water quality standards to *allow the city to keep dumping an average of 140 million gallons of untreated sewage a day* into New York City's waterways, said Brad Sewell, attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "New York City is the only place in the country that has lowered standards for swimmable and fishable waters," said Sewell. "And once they're lowered, there's no turning back."

"When New Yorkers flush their toilets and take showers, wastewater combines with rainwater (CSO) in the same sewage treatment plants. Those plants barely have enough capacity to treat the wastewater alone. When it rains, sometimes as little as a tenth of an inch, treatment plants unload excess sewage. Instead of fixing the problem, last year the city made a deal with DEC that relieves it of its obligation to meet federally mandated clean-water standards.

"While the state is tweaking the law to help the city, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Riverkeeper, New York/New Jersey Baykeeper, and Long Island Soundkeeper are challenging the Department of Environmental Protection."

The dumping continues unabated. Send an email to Livablenewyork@erols.com so that we can keep you informed.

American Continental Properties (ACP) entered in a formal agreement with Boards in Lincoln Towers. And it has been reported that the Lincoln Square Synagogue (LSS) has also entered into a partnership with ACP.

We know:

- ACP is selling the 200 West End Avenue site (W. 70th-West 69th St. E. side of WEA.).
- ACP entered into a formal agreement with 5 coop/condo boards in Lincoln Towers [on the east side of WEA] so that future residents at 200 WEA would have access to walkway going east at W. 69th Street.
- there would be \$100,000 (one-time payment) to each of the five Boards and the Lincoln Towers Community Association (LTCA).
- that LTCA would receive \$300. per apartment annually from the units to be built at 200 WEA.
- that 200 WEA would be 272 feet or 31-above-grade stories.
- that ACP is preparing to build on its W. 67th -W. 69th Street [166-188 Amsterdam] site.
- that a 1986 document states that an as-of-right, 21-story residential can be built on the site.
- that some of the stores on the site have received vacate orders.
- that the bank at 162 Amsterdam Avenue, which is owned by ACP, will remain.
- that the 3-story Reconstructionist Synagogue at 190 Amsterdam Avenue will remain. Not owned by ACP.
- that the 15-story office building owned by the Lincoln Square Synagogue will remain.
- that ACP may be interested in buying the Lincoln Square Synagogue (LSS) site at 208 Amsterdam Avenue.
- that if the synagogue site is sold, a new LSS would be built adjacent to the Reconstructionist Synagogue.

The agreement signed by ACP and the Lincoln Tower Boards limits the height of a new building to the LSS site to 601 feet (60 stories)! We don't believe that, because The Real Estate Weekly (1/27/99) reported that a 26-story building could be built on the LSS site and that the site could be built to 90,000 sq. ft.. We are trying to tie down the exact height that would be allowed on the site.

We do not know what role the LSS will play, if any, in the development of any of the sites. That is a crucial question because inclusion of a "Community Facility" can increase the allowable zoning on a site.

We can keep you better informed in a more timely manner if you send an email to livablenewyork@erols.com.

Battles on behalf of the community must continue. It's important for you to stay with us and help us. Right now, while it's on your mind, please mail your contribution which will be matched by our Challenge grant.

The Coalition for a Livable West Side's prime goal is protecting our community and environment!

Name _____ Address _____ Apt. _____ City/State _____ Zip _____

My contribution is: **Annual Dues: \$25** New Member Renew - Year 2006 Dues Pre-Pay Year 2007 Dues

- \$500 \$75
- \$250 \$50 I wish to support the Coalition for a Livable West Side's efforts on behalf of the community.
- \$200 \$25 I can help with publicity. I can attend important meetings, hearings, etc.
- \$100 other _____ I can distribute the Coalition newsletters, important flyers, etc. in my building. I need _____ copies.
- I can help with _____

Please make checks payable to: CALW, Inc. - Write Challenge Grant in lower left-hand corner of check.

Mail to: CALW, Inc., P.O. Box 230078, New York, N.Y. 10023. Contributions are tax deductible [section 501c3]

If your company has a Matching Gift program, please apply on behalf of the Coalition. We now can accept gifts of stock. We have no paid staff. If your membership has expired (see label), please renew. If you are not a member, please join.



Why Is the City Rolling the Dice in Favor of Developers?

Neither the Coalition, the community and our West Side elected officials can understand the New York City's Department of Transportation's (DOT) rush to demolish the 72nd Street Northbound Off-Ramp from the Miller Highway before the completion of the entire Riverside Boulevard (59th Street to 72nd Street).

DOT's original explanation to Community Board 7 – which was egregious on the face of it - was that the developer had asked to close the ramp and that it was part of the Riverside South 1992 Environmental Impact Statement. The developers/owners that are now involved on the site are: the Hong Kong owned Hudson Waterfront Associates (they retained ownership of the three condominiums, W. 70th to W. 72nd Street), after they sold the rest of the site, W. 59th to W. 69th St., to the Extell Corp./Carlyle Group. The three rental buildings were then sold to a Real Estate Investment Trust .

We cannot understand why it is so difficult for DOT to devise and study alternatives to closing the ramp ?

How can the City and DOT state that there had not been any substantial changes in traffic since the 1992 Riverside South Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

How can DOT ignore the fact developer's 2003 "technical memorandums" regarding traffic impacts were grossly underestimated?

How can DOT ignore the fact that they have recognized there will be increased not decreased traffic on West End Avenue after the ramp is closed? The recognition is the so-called West End Avenue Improvement Plan (WIP) will be put into effect turning West End Avenue - West 57th Street to West 70th Street - into a seven-lane roadway (3 ten foot lanes north, 3 ten foot lanes south and a ten foot left-turning lane in the center) with no south side parking during AM rush hours and no north side parking during PM rush hours.

How can they push more traffic on the West 79th Street ramps and ignore the fact that have admitted that the on and off ramps at West 79th Street are sub-standard and not in conformance with current highway standards?

How can they ignore the fact that there will be increased pressure on W. 79th Street when the interim structural repair will be done on the Henry Hudson Parkway over Amtrak from approximately 72nd to 82nd Street?

How can they ignore the traffic nightmare on W. 79th Street when the repair of the 79th Street Rotunda begins?

How can they ignore the negative impact on the W. 96th Street exit?

The Coalition for a Livable West Side, together with our neighbors, and our West Side Elected Officials, tried petitions, letters, and phone calls to our Mayor AND legal action (one win, one loss) to have DOT rescind its decision on the ramp. All to no avail.

The West Side Highway is a "life-line" – absolutely vital in case of a NYC disaster of any kind. Lopping off a piece of the highway for the sake of a developer, thereby increasing traffic on WEA, W. 79th Street and West 96th Street , still makes absolutely no sense.

Suggestions are welcome. Send us an email: livablenewyork@erols.com. We will keep you informed!!!!

Page 6

Maximize your contribution via our 10th Challenge Grant.

Coalition for a Livable West Side

P.O. Box 230078, New York, N.Y. 10023