

EL BARRIO UNITE IN OPPOSITION TO EAST RIVER PLAZA EXPANSION

Sponsored by N.E.R.V.E. Inc.

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Introduction

- Who is El Barrio Unite
 - Mission
- East River Plaza Expansion
- Historical Profile of Developers
- Community concerns regarding the proposal
- Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)
- El Barrio Unite's Plan

El Barrio Unite

- Mission:
 - To protect the residents of the East Harlem from predatory developers that threaten the decay of the community and living environment through gentrification, displacement, tax increases, exploitation and greed.
- Who we are:
 - Community based group in East Harlem that is openly opposed to the East River Plaza Residential Development (ERPRD) project (project ID # P2014M0466) proposed by the developers Blumenfeld Development Group (BDG) and Forest City Ratner (FCR).

East River Expansion

- Tiago Holdings, LLC under the development groups, Blumenfeld Development Group and Forest City Ratner, propose the construction of three residential towers on the existing East River Plaza shopping complex. The proposal would include approximately 1,000-1,200 residential units of which 20-25% would be affordable housing units, according to their proposal forms
- The towers would have approximately 32-47 stories and would rise between 320-470 feet above the platform, connected through a series of skyways equipped with residential amenity space and features.



Existing East River Plaza Shopping Structure



Proposed Expansion of East River Plaza

- BDG/FCR has not adequately shown how the proposed towers will benefit the community except for the promise of 20% affordable housing and proposed public space/park
- Several land use changes are proposed, calling for remapping and new height zoning
- BDG/FCR will apply for tax abatements and government subsidies for the project. Given the companies' history and Mayor DiBlasio's affordable housing initiatives we fear there is a lack of transparency and not enough opportunity for the community to have a say in a project that will change East Harlem forever.
- The Ultimate responsibility for approving the project lays with City Council, headed by Melissa Mark-Viverito and Mayor DiBlasio (Remember this on Election Day!)

Historical Profile of Development Groups

- City, State, and Wall Street Backed Development
- Blumenfeld Development Group:
 - Edward Blumenfeld who runs the development group has been developing retail, commercial, industrial, and residential projects in New York, New Jersey, and Florida for over three decades.
 - His personal and professional relationship with crook, Bernie Madoff is highly questionable
 - According the Bloomberg News, Blumenfeld invested about \$140 million with Madoff across 38 accounts, even an \$11 million transfer from Madoff a few days before his arrest.
 - Forced to pay ponzi scheme victims \$62 million

Forest City Ratner

- Pattern of making promises to local communities that they will generate jobs, housing, economic development, and tax revenues but do not follow through on those promises.
- In 2004, FCR promised to deliver 10,000 permanent jobs and 2,250 affordable housing units in the 22 acre Atlantic Yards project in Brooklyn in return for \$270 million direct subsidies to construct the Barclays Center. Purchasing the land for the project at less than half-price and other land through eminent domain, FCR has completed the Barclays Center but has not completed the affordable housing units and has only created 1,900 part time jobs.

How much can we trust these fat cat developers?

Answer: We can't!!

Community Concerns

- Gentrification
- Displacement
- Public safety
- Environment
- Rent increases
- Tax increases
- Decreased sun light for community garden
- Education/schools
- Health/Asthma
- Pleasant Avenue is not blighted and ineligible for redevelopment grants
- Disruption of commerce and labor at East River Plaza,
- Reduced federal and state grants due to increase in annual median income
- Land use zoning
 - Flood zone
- Tax breaks and subsidies to the developer
- Quality of life issues

Gentrification and Displacement

- Gentrification remains an ongoing concern throughout low income and underserved neighborhoods in New York City. With new developments come changes in community demographics, housing, education, services, and economic structures. We want to preserve our community with its rich culture and heritage as well as ensuring that community is served.
- Since 2000, the percent of those considered extremely poor has diminished yet the working class or those just one paycheck away from being extremely poor has decreased significantly
- The major shift in incomes is seen in the upper class and upper middle class:

Can we stop this project?

Changing Incomes

Household income	Percent 2000	Percent 2010/2012	Percent Change 2000–2010 /2012
<i>Less than \$10,000</i>	31.1	17.6	-41.9%
<i>\$10,000 to \$14,999</i>	9.5	11.6	25.5%
<i>\$15,000 to \$24,999</i>	14.4	13.9	-0.3%
<i>\$25,000 to \$34,999</i>	12.7	11.2	-8.6%
<i>\$35,000 to \$49,999</i>	12.3	11.6	-2.7%
<i>\$50,000 to \$74,999</i>	10.3	13.5	35.1%
<i>\$75,000 to \$99,999</i>	4.1	6.4	61.6%
<i>\$100,000 to \$149,999</i>	3.1	8.2	172.5%
<i>\$150,000 to \$199,999</i>	0.9	2.6	196.1%
<i>\$200,000 or more</i>	1.7	3.4	105.1%

*shifts from the *less than \$10,000* category could be attributed to lower income people moving up to the *\$10,000 to \$14,999* category

Gentrification: We're Spending more of our Income on Rent

- Data shows that 39% of households in East Harlem are spending at least 35% of their income on rent. This is an 10% increase from 2000.
- The percent of households spending less than 20% of their income on rent has decreased 10.7%

Gross rent as percentage of household income (occupied rental units)	Percent 2000	Percent 2000- 2010/2012
Less than 20 percent	34.4	23.7
20 to 24 percent	10.2	12.4
25 to 29 percent	12.3	13
30 to 34 percent	7.7	11.8
<i>35 percent or more</i>	29.8	39

Displacement

- According to the Community District 11 Report 38.1% of housing in East Harlem is public housing and 34.3% is stabilized housing.
- A 2011 study by the Regional Plan Association found that deregulation threatens the housing stock of the district, over the next 30 years approximately 31.7% of the housing stock could become deregulated.

Displacement and Housing Appreciation

- The new towers will drive up rents and property taxes in the district, with expected deregulation landlords could force many low income Harlemites out of their homes. The deregulation of affordable housing is being driven by new development and increased property values.
- In 2010/2011 East Harlem ranked number one of all City-wide neighborhoods for the number of units issued new certificates of occupancy. All the new development has led to the appreciation of housing values and subsequent increases in rent.
- East Harlem ranked number one City-wide in the index of housing price appreciation for 5+ family buildings. From 1996-2006, increasing 499.6%. Housing appreciation, while a product of gentrification can cause landlords to seek venues in which to push out low income tenants and increase rents along market rates.

Neighborhoods with the Largest Increases in Sale Prices (1996–2006)

CD	Neighborhood	% Increase
311	East Harlem (MN)	499.6%
309	Morningside/Hamilton Heights (MN)	398.7%
312	Washington Heights/Inwood (MN)	333.4%
310	Central Harlem (MN)	270.2%
202	Fort Greene/Brooklyn Heights (BK)	261.5%




Source: "Trends in New York City Housing Price Appreciation." State of New York City's Housing and Neighborhoods. Furman Center. 2008.

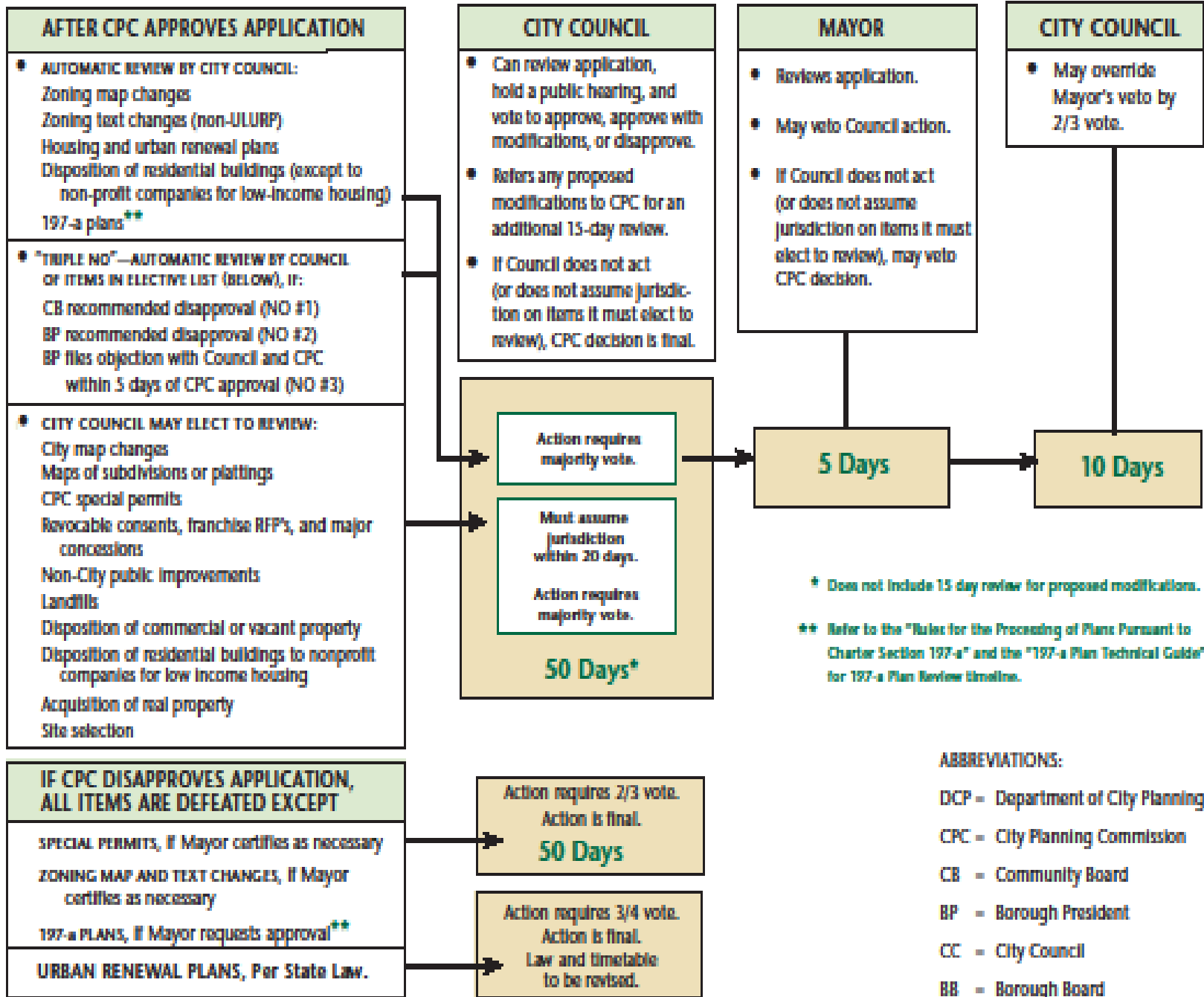
Environment and Public Health

- East Harlem already having high asthma rates, dust and debris from the construction are a further cause of concern.
- Air quality in East Harlem is already at toxic levels. The NYC Health Department's PlaNYC measured pollutants in the Upper West Side, East Harlem, the South Bronx, Hunts Point and Coney Island. The average concentration of fine particles in East Harlem is 10.6.
- According to the EPA, fine particulates— produced by vehicle exhaust and certain types of heating oil — can cause aggravated asthma symptoms, decreased lung function and irregular heart beat.
- East Harlem has the highest rate of asthma hospitalization in Manhattan, and ranks second highest for asthma-related emergency department visits, according to 2010 data from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

What is the Process?

Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

CITY MAP CHANGES MAPS OF SUBDIVISIONS PLATTINGS ZONING MAP CHANGES CPC SPECIAL PERMITS REVOCABLE CONSENTS FRANCHISE RFP'S MAJOR CONCESSIONS NON-CITY PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS HOUSING AND URBAN RENEWAL PLANS LANDFILLS DISPOSITION OF REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY SITE SELECTION	DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING Application and Pre-Certification	COMMUNITY BOARD	BOROUGH PRESIDENT and BOROUGH BOARD	CITY PLANNING COMMISSION	SEE FLOW CHART BELOW FOR THE PROCESS FOR CITY COUNCIL AND MAYORAL REVIEW (Charter Section 197-d)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives application and related documents. Forwards application and documents within 5 days to CB, BP, and CC (and BB, if project affects more than one CB). Certifies application as complete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notifies public. Holds public hearing. Submits recommendation to CPC, BP (and BB). Can waive rights on franchise RFP's and leases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BP submits recommendation to CPC or waives right to do so. BB (if project affects more than one CB) may hold a public hearing and submit recommendation to CPC or waive right to do so. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holds public hearing. Approves, modifies or disapproves application. Files approvals and approvals with modifications with City Council. Disapprovals are final, except for zoning map changes, special permits, and urban renewal plans. 		
PROCESS TAKES	No Specified Time Limit (after 6 months, applicant or BP in some cases, may appeal to CPC for certification).	60 Days	30 Days	60 Days		
<i>Clock – 1 Year</i>						
TOTAL DAYS		60 Days	90 Days	150 Days		

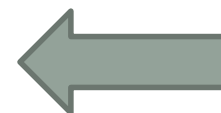


- ABBREVIATIONS:**
- DCP = Department of City Planning
 - CPC = City Planning Commission
 - CB = Community Board
 - BP = Borough President
 - CC = City Council
 - BB = Borough Board

What is the ULURP Process?

1. BDG/FCR submit a Pre-Application Statement to the New York City Department of City Planning

- Submitted April 10, 2014
- Must forward application and documents within 5 days to Community Board, Borough President, and City Council
- Certifies application as complete



2. Community Board receives the certified completed application with in 60 days they must

- Notify the public,
- hold a public hearing with sufficient public notice and publish in local newspapers and The City Record, 20% but no fewer than 7 members of the CB must be present
- Submit a written recommendation to the City Planning Commission, the Borough President, and the applicant

3. Borough President and Borough Board has 30 days to review application and submit a recommendation to City Planning Commission

4. Within 60 Days of receiving the BP's recommendation the City Planning Commission must:
 - Hold a public hearing
 - Approve, modify, or reject application
 - Files approvals and approvals with modifications with City Council
 - Disapprovals are final except for zoning map changes, special permits, and urban renewal plans

5. After CPC approval City Council automatically reviews.
 - City Council can review application, hold a public hearing and vote to approve or disapprove.
 - Refers modifications to CPC for additional 15 day review

6. Mayor- Reviews application, may veto

7. City Council can override Mayor's veto

El Barrio Unite's Plan

- Request Environmental Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, and Community Benefit Agreement
- Demand that 40% of units are affordable and remain affordable for as long as possible and that community preference is used for housing and labor in the construction of the towers.
- Attend all Public Hearings in regards to expansion
- Write letters to elected officials and community board
- Increase social media exposure by following and liking El Barrio Unite on Twitter and Facebook

Thank You!!

United States Census Data 2000-2012. American Fact Finder

“East Harlem Rent Regulated Housing Inventory and Preservation Strategies”, Regional Plan Association, July 2011, p. 7

“New York City’s Housing and Neighborhoods”, Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy – NYU, 2011, p. 100