

From: [Anderson Bridgemohan](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Reject SOMA's Proposal
Date: Sunday, September 12, 2021 12:20:59 PM

To Whom It May Concern

We need your urgent help on this issue of rejecting a proposal by SOMA Developers. The residents of 644 Riverside Drive and community members of District Nine strongly reject this proposal of rezoning by developers several times already. We have made our voices known this request to rezone from an R6A to an R8A district will put a knee on the neck of this already beautiful community and suffocates residents. The rowhouses are of great historical value. We are losing that in this process.

We are asking that the brownstones remain preserved. If this is not possible we request that the structure be constructed to remain in the current zoning of R6A.

This structure does not fit the current needs of the community. This high-rise building is too large for the community which is already stretched thin with limited resources. Already this community is overcrowded and this will only add to the problems such as pollution and lack of parking in the area. This will not only harm the environment and character of the neighborhood but also continue to push out residents due to gentrification and the rise of prices overall. 20% of the housing being affordable is not enough.

There are already enough vacant apartments for this clientele and other large buildings which can be repurposed for housing.

This building will cause residents of 644 and others to feel incarcerated, blocking views of the river and casting current residents into darkness and shadows.

As we heard in the previous meeting and in this meeting, low-income residents were already harassed and forced to move from these properties. There are already shown signs of oppressing residents and if given the opportunity this will lead to more oppression.

This building will add to inequities in the community. We hope justice will prevail and this request will be rejected.

Please support the community and reject this proposal and do not allow for it to pass.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Anderson Bridgemohan

From: [Anita Cheng](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My testimony against Proposed R8A rezoning for 633-641 W 142nd Street, Subcommittee on Zoning & Franchise
Date: Friday, September 10, 2021 4:21:25 PM

Hello Land Use Committee,

Here is a longer version of my testimony before the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises this morning:

Hello All,

As a member of the Housing, Land Use and Zoning Committee for Community Board 9. I feel that we are first, volunteers, so we are doing it out of belief, and second, that we are conduits. Our purpose is to bring forward voices that are easily left unheard. I feel a thrill whenever I hear someone speak up who is not normally heard. That is why I encourage everyone who is interested in West Harlem, corner of 142nd St and Riverside, the Community Board 9, Council Member Mark Levine, or even the ULURP process in general to watch the two Public Discussions of the Proposed R8A rezoning for 633-641 W 142nd St. on Facebook.

What are we discussing today? In fact, there are two big procedures being tested, like levees in the face of a storm: Rezoning and Community input in the ULURP process. Will the developers be able to reverse recent rezoning, AND negate community opposition? I hope not.

State Senator Robert Jackson just stated that this upzoning flies in the face of two decades of work.

I do encourage everyone to listen to the two Public Hearings held by CB9 on this development—4.5 hours of community input against.

Here's the link to the April 20th MCB9-Public Hearing on 142nd Street Rezoning:
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=474280980692518&ref=search>

Here's the link to the Sept. 7th Public Discussion:
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=590866945271688&ref=search>

Assemblyman Al Taylor stated: (1:34) It may be a good project for somewhere else, but not a good fit for the community. They are losing much more than they're getting back. And once it's gone, it would never return. I would be a thumbs down

Council Member Mark Levine stated: (1:39) I just want to emphasize a point that you made Signe, how precious our history is here, how much we take seriously the heritage of our built environment, the human scale of our community, and all the thought that went into previous rezonings and land use efforts, based on the goal to preserve that heritage.

And so I really do grieve the loss of the 4 row houses. They were never landmarked. To me that was a mistake. But they are a part of our heritage and I certainly grieve their loss.

I have many questions about the affordability fo the units. 80% AMI in some of the units is going to be out of reach of most families of our community who are truly desperate for affordable housing.

But mostly I find the height at 17 stories to be wildly out of scale with this community, with the surrounding buildings, with the low-lying buildings of this neighborhood. That's just very difficult for me to swallow. So I do have questions and concerns...

In the April 20th discussion, the developer SOMA's counsel seemed to acknowledge, in response to a question from

CB9 member, Ilana Mercado about profit, that in running different zoning exemption scenarios with different numbers of floors, they are discussing margins of profit, not whether or not they will have a profit. So at issue is the pad of their profits versus the community concerns about out-of context height, loss of sunshine, lack of affordability and the loss of our neighborhood character.

Why are we even talking about this? Because ULURP has a big weakness. At this point before the council, all the hours of community testimony against the height of this development and the repeated unanimous Community Board 9 votes against this development depend on one person to carry their message to the full council, our local council member.

I will see the actual numbers of floors built as a souvenir that Council Member Levine is leaving his district and a preview of how the probably next Manhattan Borough President will handle developers requesting upzonings.

The stakes are not equal: what the neighborhood will lose will be lost forever. I strongly ask the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises to vote against this zoning exemption. Thank you.

From: [Athena Lemakis](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 629-639 West 142nd Street Rezoning (AKA 633-641 West 142nd Street Rezoning)
Date: Sunday, September 12, 2021 3:23:31 PM

Dear City council -

I am a constituent in Council Member Mark Levin's district and I would like to register my opposition to the rezoning of 629-639 West 142nd Street Rezoning (AKA 633-641 West 142nd Street Rezoning)

I am a New Yorker and I've lived in Harlem for over 20 years. I love to walk along Riverside Drive and I'm really angry and devastated that there are plans to build a 14 story building along riverside drive. Not only will this building be a major eyesore to the architectural integrity of the area but it will block light to the park and the area. We live in a city where the sense of space and openness is in constant threat.

I'm also saddened to hear that these brownstones are being torn down and my neighbors displaced. My understanding of the history of the zoning of this area was that it was rezoned to save brownstones or at least from building tall buildings. By rezoning this area it is setting a dangerous precedent for future developers that zoning doesn't matter.

In addition, this building will not add any additional affordable housing to the neighborhood. The brownstones they plan to tear down have 22 affordable housing units whereas from my understanding from plans that I saw at a cb9 housing meeting the developers are only offering up 20 units. We will be losing affordable housing to the neighborhood.

I am VERY upset that this building will destroy the beautiful area along riverside drive. It does not fit in with the other architecture in the area and will be a huge eyesore! And these developers are operating in a very underhanded manner.

Mark Levine should be appalled that he has allowed this to happen during his tenure as a council-member.

Thank you,
Athena Lemakis

From: [Andres Orejuela](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 12:11:23 PM

Kindly find my testimony below. Thank you.

Dear Councilmembers:

I write as a resident of Community Board Nine to oppose the rezoning of 633-641 West 142 Street. The proposed rezoning would not only approve a development that far exceeds the tallest building on the surrounding streets, but it would also set a dangerous precedent by permitting a rezoning variance against the engaged, thoughtful, and diligent concerns of a community with a longstanding interest and promotion in contextual development that serves Community Board Nine residents and citizens.

Our local councilmember, Mark Levine, has voiced multiple concerns about the project, which suggests he opposes the project. Multiple State elected officials have gone on the record opposing the project. It is time to refuse the variance.

Our Community Board area, and in particular the neighborhood of this development, Hamilton Heights, has a well-known blight of affordable housing, like much of New York City. However, unlike much of Manhattan, Hamilton Heights experiences an overwhelmed infrastructure, highlighted recently by the Niagara Falls-like flooding of the West 145 Street 1 Line Subway station during Tropical Storm Ida in August 2021. Long-term disinvestment in the neighborhood, which includes the failing, crumbling, and overpopulated local Post Office as well as the dearth of supermarkets, suggest that a new development of fantastic height can only exacerbate current problems, making the neighborhood worse for its residents and for the City overall. It cannot be left unsaid an approval of a variance in this context must be considered in light of the neighborhood's largely Hispanic and Black population, which according to the most recent Federal census has diminished in favor of whites and Asians. The approval of the proposed development variance thus threatens to worsen prior racial inequities, and at the very best appears to ignore the racist conditions in the administration of City, State, and Federal government. At worst, such an approval would appear to condone this racism.

Andrés Orejuela
Community Board Nine resident

From: [Archana Bharathan](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CALL TO ACTION for 633-641 W 142nd, R8A Rezoning ULURP action
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 9:49:54 AM

Hello,

I'd like to express my support for the new proposal for the rezoning.

There's so much new development in Morningside heights and Washington heights and at first I was cautious about this proposal. But now with the new height that's more in line with other buildings on RSD I'm looking forward to new development and with it some revival in local businesses and seeing more people in our neighborhood.

Why do I want new development?

I've been seeing many empty lots and townhomes in Hamilton heights. The townhome standing at 147 & RSD staying empty is especially worrisome as there are more and more broken windows and graffiti on the walls. Crime and noise pollution have been a growing issue on RSD. With so many empty lots there's less opportunity for something good to happen in our neighborhood.

Further, there have been no alternative solutions proposed to this new development proposal by Council folks. We need clear alternate solutions. If not, we need to find ways for public and private partnership to work so that we don't keep hurting our neighborhood. We are in the 21st century and we need to adapt and find ways to move forward. We need to dialog and find a middle path that will help us all. We could, for eg. request for a roof top with solar panels or have 50% one bedroom apartments instead of studios that are affordable. We could have a café on the first floor of the building or a small cultural center for local artists. I don't know about rezoning laws. I'm just suggesting solutions. Many local businesses have shut down. Those that are opening up with a focus on environmental and social justice and equitable wages are having a hard time surviving because there aren't enough folks in the neighborhood who want to support truly local and just businesses. I see Dunkin donuts and Taco Bell and McDonalds in our neighborhood getting regular business but younger folks who are trying to create a new kind of business and services are getting shut down.

We need to get back the vibrancy of the neighborhood. A new development that has affordable units in it and keeps the character of the neighborhood intact with its architecture is much better for the neighborhood than keeping the lot vacant on principle and hurting everybody who lives in Hamilton Heights.

Thank you.

From: [andreaholder267](#)
To: [Levine, Mark](#)
Cc: [Land Use Testimony; District7](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Rezoning: 633-641 W 142nd St @ RSD
Date: Friday, September 10, 2021 12:06:56 PM

MR. Levine,

This Email is being sent to voice OPPOSITION to the ULURP rezoning application from R6A to R8A by Soma Developers.

We wish to preserve the, already existing, intimate community atmosphere of Middle Class folk.

Peace,
Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Holder
626 RSD

From: [Ilana Mercado](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 633-641 W 142nd, R8A Rezoning ULURP action
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 4:09:11 PM

My name is Ilana Mercado and I would like to testify against the proposed rezoning to R8A at 633-641 W 142nd st.

I have been a member of the Housing and Land use Committee of Community Board 9 for several years now. We have met with the developers that are proposing this rezoning several times over the past few years and we, including members of the community in general, have strongly voiced our concerns and our disapproval over the proposed rezoning to R9A, and our desire for more affordable housing and the counter effect to affordable housing that this proposed development would have. We have also voiced our concerns as to the contextual impact it will have on our historical neighborhood. We were shocked and disheartened when we found out that DCP allowed for an R8A approval over R9A, as it was never put on the table by the developer for discussion, we as a community never had an opportunity to discuss this option which is part and parcel of the ULURP process, furthermore, R8A still goes against everything that we have been fighting for and it goes against the 197a plan which was put in place in 2008, which was the community's vision plan regarding zoning and land-use to prevent the threat to our affordable housing stock and displacement of our residents. As a result of that plan, in 2012, the DCP proposed a zoning text amendment in West Harlem and it was approved by City Council. We are asking the City Council to uphold the 197a plan and vote against the R8A rezoning.

Some of our particular concerns regarding this development are the disproportionate number of studio apartments planned when what this neighborhood needs is affordable units for families. The current number of rent-stabilized apartments existing in the rowhouses would actually be more affordable apartments than what the developer has planned so that would be a loss of affordability in our community if this development goes through. If true affordability were to be reached the developer would partner with HPD and other funding sources to bring affordability to a level closer to the median income of ~40% AMI in our district. It is for these reasons that we are again asking you our City Council to vote against this ULURP action.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ilana S. Mercado, Esq.

From: [Judith Matloff](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition by community members to rezoning of 633-641 W 142 Street
Date: Friday, September 10, 2021 11:16:54 AM

Dear City Council Members:

We are writing with great alarm about the proposal to rezone 633-641 West 142 Street to allow for a tall apartment building.

We are members of the 141-142 Streets Block Association and are vehemently opposed to this proposed development. The non-contextual structure would destroy the historic character of the brownstone block and create an eyesore that would block light for those living around it. It would tower over an otherwise aesthetically appealing architecture and draw traffic to an otherwise quiet residential street.

The developer is not from the neighborhood. We would hope that Mark Levine, who represents us, and other council members will listen to the voices of residents who live here.

Thank you for your time
Judith Matloff, John van Schaik, Anton van Schaik



From: [JOSE ROSA](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NO To Soma!
Date: Friday, September 10, 2021 6:33:05 PM

Dear Mark Levine,

Unscrupulous large developments have no place in our community. We the community will not be disregarded or silenced by the SOMA Developers or City Planning Commission.

We make the demands that the brownstones remain preserved as they are of historic value and add to the neighborhood's charm. If this must be destroyed by the overzealous developers, we demand that the area remain with the current zoning of R6A. The developer should then provide affordable housing within this context if this is their true intention.

We reject the proposal for R9A, R8A, R7A, and any means of disregarding the community in the planning process.

Please support the communities wishes and reject these proposed changes.

Best,

--

Best regards,

Jose D. Rosa

From: [lauren mcgrath](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony against 633-641 W 142nd St rezoning
Date: Friday, September 10, 2021 9:12:17 AM

Hello,

I am co leader of the West 141st/142nd St Block Association and I speak for dozens of residents and homeowners on these blocks when I say that we object to the rezoning since we all feel it does not respect the history nor the esthetics of the neighborhood (and those townhomes that should be repurposed rather than bulldozed). We think that the provision of affordable housing is insufficient and would not provide a real reason for this.

Thank you for your attention,

Lauren

--

Lauren McGrath, Producer
Culinary Projects and Events
www.localfoodmaven.com

917 239 6620

From: [Michele Barron](#)
To: [mike@cityofhillsdale.com](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 143-041 W 142nd Rezoning ULR Action - Testimony
Date: Sunday, September 12, 2021 5:06:22 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@cityofhillsdale.com as an attachment (Click the More button then forward as attachment).

Dear Land Use Committee

As a resident for 2 years in Hamilton Heights and Co-
Leader of the W. 142nd Street Block Association I speak for my building residents block neighbors and long time residents of Hamilton Heights. We object to the pending request to rezone West 142nd Street and RI 142nd in order to triple the height from the existing 3 story townhouses to 7 stories existing zoning allows 7 stories which we deem also out of character of the existing street scape at 633-61 W. 142nd Street.

Under no circumstances should this be acceptable including for example the inclusion of affordable housing. Seven stories is sufficient and accords with the regulations put in place to preserve our neighborhood in 2008. We ask that you stand firm to keep the present zoning keeping our community intact.

Higher would be a violation of the aesthetic and quality of his historic area and would cast a shadow and irreparable damage on the RI 142nd and its surrounding area.

We are among a very large group of residents who have repeatedly expressed our absolute objection to Community Board 9 and with the residents and their quality of life or outside of our neighborhood who bring nothing to this community. We now look to our politicians to do their duty and not betray the community they represent. We do not care about the financial interests and backing our elected officials with campaign donations.

Yours Sincerely

Michele Barron

908-484-1901

From: [Marcus Edward](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 633-641 W 142nd, R8A Rezoning ULURP
Date: Friday, September 10, 2021 2:53:26 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

As a 20 year Hamilton Heights resident and Co-Leader of the W. 141st/142nd Street Block Association, I speak for myself, my spouse and many neighbors in objecting to the pending request to rezone in order to double the height to 14 stories vs 7 now permitted at 633-641 W. 142nd Street.

Under no circumstances is this acceptable--including, for example, the inclusion of "affordable" housing. Seven stories is sufficient.

Higher would be a violation of the aesthetics and quality of this historic area, and would cast a shadow and irreparable stain over Riverside Drive and its surrounding area.

We are among a very large group of residents who have repeatedly expressed our absolute objection at the Community Board to this request.

We now look to our politicians to not betray us to developers and their financial interests.

I note that I did attempt to attend by zoom to today's meeting, and was registered, but somehow was unable to connect.

Sincerely,

Marcus Edward


New York, NY 10031
nycmarcus@gmail.com

From: [Mirko Savone](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#); [Kelley, Chelsea](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 633-641 W 142nd, R8A Rezoning ULURP
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 12:24:13 PM

"Statement submission for 633-641 W 142nd, R8A Rezoning ULURP"

<< I VOTE IN FAVOR >>

I write to you as an Harlem resident, Harlem home owner and Condo Board President of the Rennie Condominium in Central Harlem. I would like to express my agreement with the 633-641 W 142nd - ULURP Rezoning to R8A by SOMA Developers.

In Harlem we have a shortage of housing and we desperately need additional units to accommodate the increasing demand. Harlem, just like the rest of upper Manhattan, has been left behind for too long and we too deserve the services and luxury the rest of the city prides itself on.

Harlem is a mixed community and it is growing exponentially diverse as last Census 2020 showed. We need to accommodate the needs of every resident and prepare our beautiful neighborhood to welcome the thousand new residents coming our way.

I hope you will vote in favor of this rezoning and all the other rezonings currently pending. COVID put a big dent in our local economy and the only way to bring us back is to focus on job creation and housing creation.

Harlem business owners desperately need the revenue from tourism and the increasing local population. Harlem homeowners have also invested a lot in the community and bring in higher tax revenues, which hope to see converted in safer and cleaner streets and parks. Collectively, we welcome new residents and more density as it keeps on bringing additional higher tax revenue that can be poured back into our beautiful multicultural community.

Thank you for the time you took to listen to my concerns and the concerns of all Harlem homeowners and business owners.

Best,

Mirko Savone

From: [Nicole Ford](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Cc: [Levine, Mark](#); [District7](#); [Moya, Francisco](#); [District2](#); [Ayala, Diana](#); [Grodenschik, Barry S.](#); [Levin, Stephen](#); [Joseph Borelli](#); [Reynoso, Antonio](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] opposition to 633-641 W 142nd St on Riverside - ULURP Rezoning by SOMA Developers
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:55:20 AM
Attachments: [Letter to Mark Levine 9-9-2021.pdf](#)

Nicole Ford



NY, NY 10031



nicole.ford00@gmail.com

September 9th 2021
The Hon. Mark Levine
NYC Council Member
7th District Office
New York, NY 10031

Dear Mr. Levine,

My name is Nicole Ford and I reside at [REDACTED]. I am writing to express my strong opposition to 633-641 W 142nd St on Riverside - ULURP Rezoning by SOMA Developers.

The proposed rezoning at West 142nd Street, between Broadway and Riverside Drive is currently zoned R6-A, a zoning designation shared by many of Hamilton Heights' residential brownstone blocks. While the local community may be unable to prevent development, that in itself will be detrimental to the area, nearly all residents in the neighborhood are completely opposed to the addition of an additional 7 stories and 46 additional units, a 7 to 14-story building that will cause traffic and safety problems, create even more problems with schools that are already over-capacity, destroy local wildlife habitat, and potentially lower the property values of the existing community.

It has been justified by the addition of 20 affordable housing units but the fact remains that spot zoning for such a small gain in "affordable" units sets an unfortunate and ill-advised precedent. It would alter the character of the neighborhood, further gentrify the community and offer little relief to the critical shortage of affordable housing.

I urge you to disapprove of the proposed rezoning, and from recent meetings and

discussions with my neighbors, I know my opinions are shared by many who have not managed to attend meetings or write letters and emails. Let the record show that it does not benefit our block and neighborhood and does not meet the needs of our neighbors..

Thank you for your continued service and support of our communities.

Best regards,

Nicole Ford

Nicole Ford

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
NY, NY 10031

[REDACTED]
nicole.ford00@gmail.com

September 9th 2021
The Hon. Mark Levine
NYC Council Member
7th District Office
New York, NY 10031

Dear Mr. Levine,

My name is Nicole Ford and I reside at [REDACTED]. I am writing to express my strong opposition to 633-641 W 142nd St on Riverside - ULURP Rezoning by SOMA Developers.

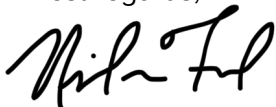
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It has been justified by the addition of 20 affordable housing units but the fact remains that spot zoning for such a small gain in "affordable" units sets an unfortunate and ill-advised precedent. It would alter the character of the neighborhood, further gentrify the community and offer little relief to the critical shortage of affordable housing.

I urge you to disapprove of the proposed rezoning, and from recent meetings and discussions with my neighbors, I know my opinions are shared by many who have not managed to attend meetings or write letters and emails. Let the record show that it does not benefit our block and neighborhood and does not meet the needs of our neighbors..

Thank you for your continued service and support of our communities.

Best regards,



Nicole Ford

ALBANY OFFICE:
306 Legislative Office Bldg.
Albany, NY 12247
Phone: (518) 455-2041

DISTRICT OFFICE:
5030 Broadway, Rm. 701
New York, NY 10034
Phone: (212) 544-0173

EMAIL: JACKSON@NYSENATE.GOV
WEBSITE: JACKSON.NYSENATE.GOV



THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK

ROBERT JACKSON
SENATOR, 31ST DISTRICT

CHAIRPERSON

Cities I

COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Civil Service and Pensions
Education
Higher Education
Housing, Construction and
Community Development
Labor
New York City Education

MEMBER

New York State Black, Puerto Rican,
Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus

September 10, 2021

Francisco Moya, Chair
City Council Zoning and Franchises Subcommittee
Chambers, City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Testimony on 629-639 West 142nd Street Rezoning a.k.a. 633-641 West 142nd Street Rezoning (LU 0836-2021 and LU 0837-2021)

Thank you Chair Moya, members of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, and staff for holding today's hearing.

I oppose the rezoning of West 142nd Street from R6A to R8A. I opposed the original plan of upzoning to R9A, as well, when it was presented in April to the Community Board. I'm following the community's lead, and so should the Council.

As I heard at CB 9's Housing, Land Use, and Zoning Committee emergency hearing on this matter on Tuesday in a unanimous vote of committee members, board members, and the public attending, the West Harlem community is not opposed to development overall. They are opposed to **this** development that would destroy the character of a historic block without meaningfully addressing the affordability crisis.

This rezoning flies in the face of the nearly two decades of work by this community and Community Board to plan intentionally. In their 2007 197-a Plan that I actively participated in, they stated that the goal is to "Ensure that future development is compatible with the existing and historic urban fabric and complements the neighborhood's character." Neither the R9A nor the lightly revised R8A building plans are compatible.

Let me be clear, this upzoning will also take away affordable units. In these existing brownstones, there are currently 24 rent-stabilized apartments of various sizes to accommodate different family configurations. The proposal from the developer would create 20 units of so-called "affordable" housing that will be mostly studios and one-bedrooms at levels that don't meet the incomes of our neighbors most at risk in this housing affordability crisis.

I strongly encourage the subcommittee to listen to the nearly unanimous will of the community and reject this application for upzoning on West 142nd Street near Riverside Drive. Thank you.

From: [Onur Kasim](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#); [Kelley, Chelsea](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I APPROVE 633-641 W 142nd - ULURP Rezoning to R8A
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 6:43:11 PM

I am writing to you in regards to the ULURP Re zoning application by the developer SOMA in Harlem at 633-641 W 142nd Street.

As an Harlem resident and home owner, I welcome this rezoning with open arms. I grew up in Harlem, got my education here at City College and I love seeing my neighborhood growing and thriving. COVID hit us hard and we now need more than ever to expedite rezoning and construction of new homes and commercial spaces.

With the imminent opening of new hotels and museums in Harlem, we will soon be having a lot more tourists and an increase number of new residents. We need to have more housing and more commercial spaces to satisfy the increasing demand.

The city is shifting north and we can't keep Harlem behind the rest of the city. I hope you will vote yes to this rezoning and to the other ones following this. Harlem needs this!

A concern Harlemiter,

Kerem Kasim*

*Proud resident of Central Harlem - Zip: 10030

From: [Signe Mortensen](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Cc: [Levine, Mark](#); [District7](#); [Moya, Francisco](#); [District2](#); [Ayala, Diana](#); [Grodenschik, Barry S.](#); [Levin, Stephen](#); [Joseph Borelli](#); [Reynoso, Antonio](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] WRITTEN STATEMENT regarding 629-639 W 142nd St (AKA 633-641 West 142nd Street Rezoning)
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 9:45:31 AM
Attachments: [Signe Mortensen WRITTEN STATEMENT-633-641 W 142.pdf](#)

Dear City Council Members:

Please see below and attached my written statement in regard to agenda item #2 "629-639 W 142nd St (AKA 633-641 West 142nd Street Rezoning" on the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises hearing this Friday, September 10th.

Thank you committee for hearing our testimonies today. As Co-chair for the land use and zoning committee on CB9 where this project lives I want to share some backstory on the two decades long journey to protect our community that has brought us here today and why the community board and neighbors are so strongly opposed to this R8A rezoning.

In the early 2000's the community board engaged our neighbors to address the concerns spurred by the expansion of institutions such as Columbia into Manhattanville and above 125th. The threat to our affordable housing stock and displacement of our residents led to the creation of our 197-a plan in 2008 which laid out a Roadmap and a vision for our community regarding zoning, land use and development in our district.

In 2012, as a result of that plan, the DCP proposed a zoning text amendment in West Harlem, approved by this City Council.

Within that rezoning this very block of row houses on 142nd was carved out and downzoned from R8 to R6A to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood and provide consistency with the surrounding buildings on that block.

Here we are just 9 years later considering a rezoning BACK to R8A, but the issues that concern our neighbors are still in place.

- The disproportionate number of proposed studio apartments in a neighborhood in desperate need of family sized apartments.
- The loss of affordable units overall when compared to the current number of rent-stabilized apartments existing in the rowhouses.
- We want to see the developer partner with HPD and other funding sources to

broaden and deepen affordability to a level closer to the median income of ~40% AMI in our district.

- The fact that the community downzoned this particular block as part of the DCP-led 2012 West Harlem rezoning to avoid a situation of out of scale development on a block containing mostly historic rowhouses.
- The height of the building on what is historically a rowhouse block that is currently part of the proposed extension of the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District.
- The loss of historic buildings that would contribute to the proposed extension of the Hamilton Heights/Sugar Hill Historic District

On April 20th the Community Board had a hearing on the R9A proposal and all 60+ attendees, including the community board members and public on that call unanimously opposed the rezoning. 3 days ago we hosted a public discussion on the altered R8A option, and again it was unanimously opposed on the call by all 50+ committee and public attendees..

In conclusion we ask that you hear the overwhelming voices of our neighbors impacted by this rezoning and vote to NOT approve this ULURP action.

Thank you

Signe Mortensen

Co-Chair, Housing, Land Use and Zoning of CB9 Manhattan

206-919-5899

signesings@gmail.com

WRITTEN STATEMENT regarding 629-6439 W 142nd St (AKA 633-641 West 142nd Street Rezoning)

Thank you committee for hearing our testimonies today. As Co-chair for the land use and zoning committee on CB9 where this project lives I want to share some backstory on the two decades long journey to protect our community that has brought us here today and why the community board and neighbors are so strongly opposed to this R8A rezoning.

In the early 2000's the community board engaged our neighbors to address the concerns spurred by the expansion of institutions such as Columbia into Manhattanville and above 125th. The threat to our affordable housing stock and displacement of our residents led to the creation of our 197-a plan in 2008 which laid out a Roadmap and a vision for our community regarding zoning, land use and development in our district.

In 2012, as a result of that plan, the DCP proposed a zoning text amendment in West Harlem, approved by this City Council.

Within that rezoning this very block of row houses on 142nd was carved out and downzoned from R8 to R6A to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood and provide consistency with the surrounding buildings on that block.

Here we are just 9 years later considering a rezoning BACK to R8A, but the issues that concern our neighbors are still in place.

1. The disproportionate number of proposed studio apartments in a neighborhood in desperate need of family sized apartments.
2. The loss of affordable units overall when compared to the current number of rent-stabilized apartments existing in the rowhouses.
3. We want to see the developer partner with HPD and other funding sources to broaden and deepen affordability to a level closer to the median income of ~40% AMI in our district.
4. The fact that the community downzoned this particular block as part of the DCP-led 2012 West Harlem rezoning to avoid a situation of out of scale development on a block containing mostly historic rowhouses.
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Signe Mortensen
Co-Chair, Housing, Land Use and Zoning of CB9 Manhattan
206-919-5899
signesings@gmail.com

From: tvandyne@nyc.rr.com
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on the Proposed ULURP at Riverside Drive and West 142nd Street
Date: Friday, September 10, 2021 10:07:46 AM

Borough: Manhattan

Block: 2089

Lots: 14, 15, 115, 16 and 17

Community District: 9

The 15 row houses are fine examples of their period and incredibly intact. Had these buildings been in a more affluent neighborhood they would have been Landmarked as a group decades ago. The rezoning of the row houses to R6A nine years ago was to make them less attractive for poaching to create a large building and to make them attractive to restoration/renovation. The program has been a success. So far five of the eleven row houses not in the ULURP have been rehabilitated. Three have been discretely added to. The program should be allowed to continue as is. The loss of any of these row houses would be detrimental to the block.

The intent of the ULURP process was wholesale rethinking of failed neighborhoods or undeveloped land. It's a shame it has become a tool for developers to have extreme value added to their property by having the city change the rules just for them. Why have a Zoning Resolution when developers can petition to change a zone to line their pockets with complete disregard for what makes sense for the growth of the neighborhood? If the developers want to build an R8A building, they should buy an R8A lot. Buying an R6A lot and expecting the city to upgrade it for free is a corruption of the process.

Terry D Van Dyne

Architect

From: [Yuien Chin](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#); marklevinenyc@gmail.com; [District7](#); [Manhattan BP Gale Brewer](#); [District12](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony re 633-641 West 142nd Street, Harlem
Date: Saturday, September 11, 2021 7:21:23 PM
Importance: High

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@cyber.nyc.gov as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

Good Evening,

My name is Yuien Chin, and I have been a resident and property owner in Hamilton Heights for over 28 years. I am here to voice my opposition to the proposed spot rezoning of Block 2089 lots 16, 17, and 18, also known as 633-641 W 142nd Street, and urge CB9 and City Council to honor and respect the community desires as stated in the 2012 West Harlem Rezoning Plan which is to retain these lots as R6A and preserve the historic fabric and character of the residential side streets.

The 2012 rezoning plan was a community-wide effort. It took almost five years to negotiate community needs and future expectations regarding community planning and growth into the future. Preceded by CB9's 197A Plan, the West Harlem Rezoning was a painstaking process that started in 2007 and the most participatory approach in the recent history of this community. The community's choices were resoundingly clear throughout both processes - Hamilton Heights residents want and still desire a livable community. Therefore, we oppose over-development and towers, except as noted in the 2012 rezoning plan along 145 at the Broadway and Amsterdam intersections. We oppose mid-block community facilities development on residential blocks. And, we adamantly oppose the destruction of historic structures that represent a group of ten houses at 629 to 639 West 142nd Street, erected in 1899. These houses designed by Henri Fouchaux are a grouping of the earliest rowhouses built in West Harlem. We must preserve these structures and others as a living part of our community life and development. In doing so, it gives orientation to our local history and that of America.

We urge CB9, City Councilmember Mark Levine and the City Council body, and Borough President Gale Brewer to respect their constituent community and the West Harlem Community Zoning Plan and do the right thing, oppose the proposal to spot zone 633-641 W 142nd Street.

Additionally, we are property owners and tenants - taxpayers who have collectively invested and contributed to the betterment of this community.

Don't we also have the right to determine the environment in which we have invested?

Perhaps not, by this developer's estimation.

The architects of this project were well aware of the zoning regulation for the proposed site and that the area was deemed eligible for the State Historic District designation and National Register Listing and consideration by LPC. However, they appear to be politically bolstered in their thinking and seem confident in their network within the system to approve their proposal and have pushed forward by carving doughnut-holes in a legitimate community plan and disrupting lives?

The developer states he is providing or answering to community needs and that the site is a soft site flagged for development. This is untrue. The rezoning plan only identifies the soft sites as 145th at Amsterdam and Broadway. The proposed project site is in the residential section of Hamilton Heights and is not a potential development site. The developer also proposes a net return of affordable housing (not permanently affordable) of 17 units which is reduced from the existing 24 units.

There is no benefit to the community by this project. The benefits are all to the developer with minimal gain in affordable housing while leveraging our neighborhood's natural views, the park, and the waterfront for their own gain. This project brings height, bulk, and increase density to this block's narrow sidewalk and street. It will gentrify a block primarily Latino and African-American working-class families and disrupts the social culture by displacement - already begun.

We are also disappointed at the manipulation of the process as handled by the City Planning Commission and the disrespect that is being shown to the community board by excluding them from the process in preference for private talks with the city officials. Based on this it is no surprise the developer feels empowered in the displacement and creating unacceptable living conditions for former tenants. Why are the City and Council rewarding the developer for bad behavior?

Finally, the 2012 rezoning plan was an open process and one which is certified by the City of New York. We urge you to retain the current zoning of R6A and vote NO to the proposed spot rezoning of 633-641 W 142nd Street. The constituents whom you represent reject this project and the residents of W 142nd say NO to this project.

Thank you,

Yuien Chin

Resident and Executive Director, West Harlem Community Preservation Organization