

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING
AND FRANCHISES

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April 13, 2015
Start: 9:53 a.m.
Recess: 2:35 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: MARK S. WEPRIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Daniel R. Garodnick
Jumaane D. Williams
Donovan J. Richards
Antonio Reynoso
Ritchie J. Torres
Vincent J. Gentile
Ruben Wills

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Phillip Robertson
S.W. Architects
Mercury Tacos, LLC
d/b/a Otto's Tacos

Robert Eneck [sp?]
Consultant
Dominique Ansel Kitchen

Frank Ruchala
Deputy Director of Zoning
Department of City Planning

Helen Gitelson
Executive Director of Code Development
New York City Department of Buildings

Edward Ferrier
Deputy Assistant Chief
Bureau of Fire Prevention
NYC Fire Department

Gus Sirakis
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Land Use Counsel
Warshaw Burstein

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Kohn Pedersen Fox

Robert Paley
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Federico Cuenca
Director of Strategic Initiatives
Metropolitan Transportation Authority - MTA

Robert Paley
Director of Transit Oriented Development
Metropolitan Transportation Authority - MTA

David Haase
Director of Station Planning
Metropolitan Transportation Authority - MTA

Ellen Imbimbo
Vice Chair of Land Use and Waterfront Committee
Community Board 6 - Appearing for:
Terry O'Neal, Chair of Land Use Committee

Wella Ruben
Appearing for: Vikki Barbero
Chair of Community Board 5

John West
Community Board 6

Jay Black
Director of Sustainability
SL Green Realty Corp.

Peter Shaw
International WELL Building Institute

Russell Unger
Executive Director
Urban Green Council

Caroline Harris
Goldman Harris, LLC.

Andrea Goldwyn
New York Landmarks Conservancy

Roxanne Warren
Architect

Jim Gutmann
Vice President
New York Office of Hines

Markisha Page
NEW - Non-Traditional Employment for Women

Kathleen Culhane, President
NEW -Non-Traditional Employment for Women

Donna Tucker
Regional Alliance for Small Contractors

John Tritt
Director Political Director
Hotel Trades Council.

Edison Wallace
Service Employees International Local Union 32BJ

Manuel Contreras
New York City Political Organizer
Local SEIU 32BJ.

Richard C. Anderson
President
New York Building Congress

Donald Ranshte
Senior Vice President
Building Trades Employer's Association

Colin Wright
New York League of Conservation of Voters

Sami Naim
Vice President for Law and Policy
Municipal Arts Society

Joseph Rosenberg
Director
Catholic Community Relations Council

Pierina Sanchez
Associate Planer
Regional Plan Association of New York
Appearing for: President Tom Wright

Moses Silverman
Central Synagogue

Leo Corrine
Liebor House

Peter Lempin
Grand Central Partnership
Midtown Manhattan Business Improvement District

Nick Sifuentes
Deputy Director
Riders Alliance

William Higgins
Partner
Higgins Quasebarth & Partners

Rashan Taccacardi[sp?] .
Partner - Sharp Architects
Professor at Columbia University

Carol Willis
Historian and Founding Director
Skyscraper Museum

Professor Moss

2 [sound check]

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Let's get started.

4 [background comment]

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Well, let me
6 just--before we start, I want to just give a little
7 parameters. We have a number of items on today's
8 very busy agenda. It's probably going to be a long
9 day. Just so you know, we are going--we have two
10 sidewalk cafes that we're going to take up first.
11 Then we have two other items, the Stairway Text
12 Amendment, and then an item in Council Member
13 Treyger's district. And then we'll get to the main
14 event, which is One Vanderbilt, which has the largest
15 crowd here today. We'll take those in that order or
16 less.

17 [pause]

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right, so just
19 for attendance purposes, good morning. By the way,
20 my name is Mark Weprin. I'm Chair of the Zoning and
21 Franchises Subcommittee, and I want to welcome
22 everybody here today. We've been joined by Council
23 Member Vincent Gentile, Council Member Dan Garodnick,
24 Council Member Donovan Richards, and Council Member
25 Antonio Reynoso. We also have been joined by the

2 Chair of the Land Use Committee to my left, Council
3 Member David Greenfield, and for sake of the record
4 we just want to give Dan Garodnick the gold star
5 today. Okay, so let's get right into the cafes.

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: [off mic] 195

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: First, we're going
8 to start with Land Use No. 195, Otto's Tacos. Say
9 that five times fast, and I'd like to call up Phillip
10 Robinson, who represents Tacos, LLC. Mr. Robertson.
11 Welcome. Come to--it's a long table, but why don't
12 you take the one closer to you there. When you get
13 there, make sure the mic is on. State your name for
14 the record, and describe the application. This is on
15 11 Park Place in Council Member Johnson's district.

16 [background comments]

17 PHILLIP ROBERTSON: Hi, my name is
18 Phillip Robertson. I'm representing S.W. Architects.
19 We are representing sidewalk cafe Otto Tacos.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Could you speak a
21 little louder or a little closer to the mic? One of
22 those two.

23 PHILLIP ROBERTSON: Dear Council Member
24 Johnson, Otto Tacos, managing and 002 Mercury Tacos,
25 LLC is--in connection our application for an

2 unenclosed sidewalk closed cafe hereby commit to the
3 Council--to the City Council in light of the concerns
4 of a tree pit. We have finished the tree pit, as
5 requested. Please see attached photos.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.
7 Any members--Council Member Johnson has been in
8 agreement with this matter, and has worked on this
9 letter with them. So he is okay. Do any members of
10 the panel have any questions? Okay. Well, with
11 that, we thank you. We excuse you. Is anyone else
12 here to testify on this cafe, Otto's Tacos? We've
13 got to give you the commercial and make sure we say
14 it a few times. I see none. We're going to close
15 this hearing, and move onto the next item, which is
16 Land Use No. 196. It's Dominique Ansel Kitchen. Is
17 there someone here? Oh, there is someone here.
18 Okay. Good. Come on up.

19 [pause]

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's okay. All
21 right, the same--same rules. Please make sure to
22 state your name and try to speak loudly into the
23 microphone. Describe the application. This, too, is
24 in Council Member Johnson--and I know he's been
25 working with you on this matter as well. Go ahead.

2 ROBERT ENICK: Good morning.

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Better.

4 ROBERT Okay. My name is Robert
5 Enick[sic]. I'm a consultant working with Dominique
6 Ansel Kitchen for a sidewalk cafe license seating 28
7 people. The Community Board has issued three
8 stipulations, which we had addressed in a letter to
9 the City Council a couple of weeks ago. The first
10 one was the removal of a bike rack prior to this
11 hearing. That bike rack was removed on April 13th.
12 The second was a concession made by the operator to
13 close the cafe daily at 7:00 p.m. The operator has
14 agreed to do that, and the [coughs] third was to
15 submit a revised plan to DCA to include a sound
16 attenuating awning. That plan has been submitted.
17 That plan has also been subsequently approved by the
18 Department of Buildings and the Landmarks Commission.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Great and this, too,
20 Council Member Johnson has helped negotiate, and he
21 is now in favor of this cafe getting its permit.
22 Does anyone on the panel have any questions? I see
23 none again. Thank you very much, sir. You're
24 excused. Is anyone in the audience here to testify
25 on this matter? Seeing none, we're going to close

2 this hearing, and now move on. Okay, we're going to
3 bring up Land Use 205, which is the Stairways Text
4 Amendment. I know if I misstated that before, but
5 stairwell. Frank Ruchala, Edward Ferrier, Andrea
6 Goldwyn, and Helen Gitelson. There you all are.
7 Look at how separated you were. You have to decide
8 where to sit. We have a big panel today. All right.
9 We have a lot of City employees here. So we want to
10 get you guys back to work. So we'll put you right
11 up. Whenever you're ready, you have a Power Point.
12 So whenever you're ready to start. Just make sure
13 when you speak, you state your name for the record so
14 it's clear who is talking if someone was reading it.
15 Thank you.

16 FRANK RUCHALA: Thank you. Good
17 afternoon. I'm Frank Ruchala, Deputy Director of
18 Zoning for the Department of City Planning. The
19 Department in collaboration with the Department of
20 Buildings and the Fire Department is proposing its
21 Citywide Zoning Text Amendment to facilitate and make
22 effective additional safety measures that are part of
23 the New York City 2014 Building Code. These safety
24 measures are intended to enhance public safety and
25 new high-rise non-residential building by providing

2 additional existing--existing capacity for building
3 occupants during emergency situations that require
4 full building evacuation. These standard--these
5 safety recommendations resulted from an extensive
6 study by the National Institute of Standards and
7 Technology of the World Trade Center disaster. The
8 report recommended several changes to be incorporated
9 into the model building codes including--

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Just--
11 -just try to speak a little louder, a clearer.

12 FRANK RUCHALA: Sure.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: My hearing is
14 starting to go, too--

15 FRANK RUCHALA: [interposing] Sure.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --so if you just try
17 to be as clear and as loud as possible.

18 FRANK RUCHALA: Decreasing the time it
19 takes to evacuate an entire building in an emergency.
20 Increasing the ability of first responders to access
21 building occupants, and provide greater redundancy
22 and escape routes to ensure that--so that if one
23 route becomes unavailable, there are still adequate
24 capacity to exit or evacuate the building. These
25 changes were adopted into the New York City Building

2 Code as part of Local Law 141 of 2013, a/k/a the New
3 York--the 2014 Construction Code. The law
4 stipulates, however, that these safety provisions
5 will only become effective once the a text amendment
6 is approved to exempt the space occupied by these
7 features for counting toward zoning floor area. The
8 Proposed Text Amendment consisting of an amendment to
9 Section 12-10 of the Zoning Resolution to exempt
10 floor space that is occupied by the additional safety
11 measures from counting toward zoning floor area.
12 These safety measures are required for all new non-
13 residential building that are greater than 420 feet
14 in height or mixed-use buildings that contain non-
15 residential space a height of 420 feet.
16 Predominantly residential buildings and fully
17 residential buildings are not subject to the
18 additional requirements, and are not affected by this
19 text amendment. Why not residential? We've gotten a
20 couple of questions over this. There are several
21 reasons for this. The first is the Building Code has
22 more stringent egress requirements for commercial--
23 for non-residential buildings given the higher
24 population generally found in a non-residential
25 building. Additionally, as part of the 2008 Building

2 Code Changes, were made to increase the width of
3 stairs for residential building, and a similar text
4 amendment exempting the floor area for those stairs
5 was included in 2008.

6 The affected area of the city is
7 generally those areas where high-density buildings
8 are permitted. Generally areas like Lower Manhattan,
9 Midtown and Downtown Brooklyn, and in looking at
10 this, the department found in about the last 20 years
11 that around 29 non-residential buildings had achieved
12 a height of over 420 feet. Most of them located--all
13 of them located in these areas. The Building Code
14 provision requires that one of the three following
15 safety measures be included in the building. One,
16 occupant evacuation elevators, which are effectively
17 safety elevators that in an emergency one can
18 actually use to exit the building. Two, increase
19 fire stair width. It requires the stair width to be
20 increased by 25%, or the inclusion of a third
21 emergency access stair.

22 The Department looked at the size of
23 these in typical buildings and found that on the per
24 floor they generally depending on which one is chosen
25 ranging in size from three--about 40 square feet to

2 around 150 square feet per floor. And then when we
3 looked at this in relation to actual buildings, this
4 in total in a building would result in at most
5 somewhere--a little less than a single additional
6 story on the top of the building when we looked at a
7 variety of instances. Of that, the proposal was
8 referred out to all of the affected community board,
9 as well as the borough presidents, and all approved
10 the proposal as well as the City Planning Commission.
11 And that's it.

12 [pause]

13 FRANK RUCHALA: And that's it.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right, I'm still
15 getting my head around the fact that all of those
16 community boards are--it is something.

17 FRANK RUCHALA: It's a rare event.

18 [laughter] And approved without conditions, too.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. All right. I
20 didn't mention that I'm joined behind by Tish James,
21 our Public Advocate. I didn't realize she was there
22 until I heard her giggle at one point. Sorry. I
23 didn't know she was there. I'd like to call on
24 Council Member Garodnick who has a question.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you.
3 Very briefly and thank you for the presentation. I
4 wanted to know a little bit more about the Occupant
5 Self-Evacuation Elevators because this is a--a
6 concept that I'm not incredibly familiar with. And
7 as I understand it from your presentation, these are
8 elevators that you actually could use in an emergency
9 based on the existence of emergency generators. Is
10 that right?

11 FRANK RUCHALA: I believe that is
12 correct, yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And it's an
14 option--one of three options or maybe even one and a
15 half of the three options that are available. So you
16 can either put those in--put those in and add 25% to
17 your fire exist stairway or just do an additional
18 emergency exit stairway. What--what can you tell us
19 about the safety and reliability of occupant self-
20 evacuation elevators. It sounds like something that
21 would concern me as somebody who was in a commercial
22 building was offered an opportunity to get into an
23 elevator to evacuate, you're always told your whole
24 life do not get into an elevator when it's time to
25 evacuate. But here we're suggesting that that would

2 be one New York City approved method for evacuation.
3 Tell us about the safety and reliability of that and
4 why we shouldn't be concerned?

5 HELEN GITELSON: My name is Helen
6 Gitelson. I'm the Executive Director of Code
7 Development at the New York City Department of
8 Buildings. One of the reasons that Occupant
9 Evacuation Elevators are now being included in the
10 Building Code as a way to further full building
11 evacuations is based on the National Institute of
12 Science and Technology's studies. Which found that a
13 variety of different evacuation methods, for lack of
14 a better word, help to evacuate a building quicker.
15 In other words, picture a high-rise building with
16 elderly handicapped and without--without several
17 modes of getting people out quicker. Those people
18 tend to decrease the evacuation time walking down the
19 steps. So, the studies have all found that with a
20 combination of stairs and Occupant Evacuation
21 Elevators, you can evacuate a building much, much
22 quicker. And these types of elevators are hardened.
23 There's emergency communication. So it's not just a
24 regular elevator, it's a special type of elevator.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Well, I
3 certainly understand the first part that maximizing
4 your options can speed up evacuation. What I'm still
5 a little unclear on is the special type of elevator
6 point. As to what it is about this elevator that
7 makes it hardened, secure, impenetrable from problem
8 and that would give New Yorkers confidence if they
9 needed to get into it it's a good thing. And would
10 help them get out of the building faster, as opposed
11 to being stuck in an elevator.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Please state your
13 name.

14 EDWARD FERRIER: Hi. Good morning. My
15 name is Deputy Assistant Chief, Edward Ferrier from
16 the Bureau of Fire Prevention, Fire Department, City
17 of New York. I would like to address your question.
18 Basically the Occupant Evacuation Elevator is one of
19 three choices. You're correct that we've been, you
20 know, trained throughout our lifetime not to use
21 elevators in case of fire emergencies. But, as a
22 result of the 9/11 event, MIS did a study, and I
23 believe it's No. 17. It's a recommendation by MIS
24 that we need to develop new procedures for full
25 building evacuation. Today, where we're building

2 higher and higher buildings, if you notice that this
3 proposal is for building in excess of 420 feet. I
4 believe there's a building now, a residential
5 building that's going up, it's at 432 Park. You
6 can't miss it on the skyline. It's quite high. I've
7 been informed that there are other buildings in the
8 process. This proposal doesn't affect residential.
9 It's for non-residential building. Non-residential
10 high-rise buildings, and the whole purpose about the
11 Occupant Evacuation Elevator in terms of it's a
12 hardened elevator. Basically, it's an elevator that
13 will resist, you know, water damage, smoke damage.
14 It will prevent the spread of heat, smoke, and gases
15 throughout the building. It's a new design. It's
16 something that was put forward by ASME as a new
17 standard. It's also in the International Code
18 Council, the International Building Code. They put
19 that in there. So New York City has been adopting
20 International Code Council's family of codes and
21 that's in there. So it's--we're moving forward and
22 we're trying to find new ways to evacuate buildings
23 whether it's for a fire, or a natural event. Or, in
24 the unlikely event of like a terrorist event where we
25 can evacuate the building in a timely fashion.

1 You've got to realize, too, if you have a
2
3 building that's over 420 feet, you can't expect
4 people to walk down all the--downstairs in an event.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Look, I
6 appreciate all of that, and I--and I, you know, if--
7 if one could be persuaded that there is a way other
8 than walking down the stairs, where you could safely
9 evacuate a building, I'm all for it. But it sounds
10 like we are relying on a variety of studies that have
11 said, well, in tall non-residential buildings where
12 you have a high density of population on high floors,
13 you need alternative measures. And this is one,
14 which building---where builders should actually
15 consider as an option. Has any other city
16 implemented occupant evaluation elevators. Could you
17 give us a sense of what that looks like, where and
18 how they're working.

19 EDWARD FERRIER: I don't think any other
20 city has. I think it's an--I'm being correct here.
21 Hold on.

22 GUS SIRAKIS: This is Gus Sirakis from
23 the New York City Department of Buildings. The
24 Occupant Evacuation Elevator requirements we've
25 adopted from the International Building Code, which

2 is adopted in many jurisdictions across the country.
3 I don't know have which specific jurisdictions, but
4 from the 2012 edition on, it's been in the--in the
5 International Building Code.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: It's in the
7 Code and I'm sorry to harp on this, but I just, you
8 know, I want to make sure that I understand it. I'm
9 sorry that--that I don't, but are there any cities
10 that actually have adopted the rules. And are there
11 buildings out there in the world--I'm not going to
12 limit us to the United States--but are there
13 buildings out there, tall buildings in the world that
14 have Occupant Evacuation Elevators. And, if you can
15 take me to the next step how have they performed in
16 an emergency?

17 GUS SIRAKIS: There are definitely
18 jurisdictions that have adopted the International
19 Building Code with the Occupant Evacuation Elevator
20 requirements. I don't have the list of the specific
21 buildings that we know of that have Occupant
22 Evacuation Elevators worldwide, but we can get that
23 to you.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay. So we
3 don't know then how any of them have performed in an
4 emergency either? Is that fair?

5 GUS SIRAKIS: I can't speak to that. I
6 can't speak to that first hand.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Mr. Chair, I'm
8 a--I'm a little concerned about that answer. But I
9 will--you know, that's all the questions that I have,
10 but I will flag that as a concern.

11 EDWARD FERRIER: Could I add something.
12 Could I just add something also? Is that the--

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Do you want to try
14 again, Deputy Chief?

15 EDWARD FERRIER: [laughs] The ASME
16 Standard has been looked on by elevator experts for
17 the last 10 years. This is not something that's a
18 light undertaking that we're just taking advantage
19 of. It's something that has a lot of forethought,
20 and a lot of work to propose this. Hopefully, it's--
21 and I say hopefully because again I'm not sure
22 either. But the reality is that we have to take a
23 step forward to evaluate tall buildings, excessively
24 tall buildings in a timely fashion. And, you know,

2 the choice of giving three options is something that
3 the Fire Department is in favor of.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Just in curiosity in
5 following up a little bit on that point, is there any
6 danger that other buildings--and I know everybody has
7 their own fire evacuation plan. But they're the
8 buildings that will all of a sudden feel confident if
9 they hear about this of taking--if they all of a
10 sudden they decide to take elevators where they
11 should not in the older buildings?

12 [pause]

13 EDWARD FERRIER: Could you repeat the
14 question?

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, I'm just
16 curious. If we start--I mean this is a pretty
17 dramatic change from what everyone has always known
18 about leaving a big building, don't take the
19 elevators. You're not saying it will now be okay to
20 take it on these buildings. Does it run the risk as
21 it gets out that people get confused whether they can
22 take an elevator or not in a particular building they
23 are in?

24 EDWARD FERRIER: I could understand that.
25 Yes, that could happen, but with training we're

2 required to have drills. With training and repeated
3 efforts, I think that people realize that they're
4 working in a building that they can use the elevator
5 for evacuation. You have to bear in mind it's not as
6 if, you know, you could--the elevators could have an
7 indication. There could be LED signs. There's fire
8 command station down in the lobby. This could be
9 people who--announcements are going to be made. I
10 mean it's not taken lightly, and we understand that
11 most people are realizing, you know, it's going to be
12 a slow process and it's only going to take place in
13 new buildings after June 30th. The permits are filed
14 after June 30th. So this is going to be a slow
15 process in the future. And again, it's only going to
16 be in super tall buildings that are greater than 420
17 feet.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Anybody else
19 want to comment or question?

20 HELEN GITELSON: Can I just add one
21 thing? We was--we were just looking, and the World
22 Trade Center No. 3. No, I'm sorry, No. 4 has
23 actively--has voluntarily put in Occupant Evacuation
24 Elevators. So they're in--and we can give you some
25 other--other information that we have back in the

2 office. So it's currently now a choice that building
3 designers are using--recognizing that they want to--
4 to increase the evacuation capacity to evacuate--a
5 full building evacuation quicker.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: If it's possible for
7 you to get some information for Council Member
8 Garodnick and all of us about other jurisdictions.

9 HELEN GITELSON: We'll do that.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You know, that's
11 obviously a concern. Dan, did you want to add
12 something?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: [off mic] No.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, and Council
15 Member Greenfield has one question.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman. I just have one question. Something
18 that I was wondering about, and it actually came via
19 one of my follows on Twitter. What took so long to
20 implement this 9/11, post 9/11 proposal?

21 HELEN GITELSON: [off mic] Do you want to
22 take that?

23 GUS SIRAKIS: So the--

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You guys are all too
25 soft spoken for me. Nice and strong.

2 GUS SIRAKIS: Apologies.

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We're very
4 aggressive up here.

5 GUS SIRAKIS: Part of it is the standards
6 for the elevators had to be developed to--to go
7 through a committee process where experts and
8 stakeholders had the ability to weigh in about their
9 concerns and make sure that these types of safety
10 enhancements would be implemented properly. Then
11 it's got to go through an adoption process through
12 the International Building Code. There is a multi-
13 step process where the elevators and other safety
14 measures like elevators are heard through a committee
15 of building officials, architects, engineers, and
16 other experts including fire officials as to getting
17 this adopted. So this made it into the International
18 Building Code in 2012, and we are now adopting this
19 requirement.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: It still
21 feels like a long--

22 GUS SIRAKIS: [interposing] Excuse me,
23 2009.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: It still
25 seems like a long time, especially considering that

2 it was in the code in 2009. Are there any other
3 safety suggestions that have yet to have been
4 adopted, or is this sort of the last of the safety
5 suggestions.

6 HELEN GITELSON: These--this is the last-
7 -one of the last groups. Remember the 2008 code is
8 base on the 2003 International Code. So there's--
9 there's lag time for New York City to adopt the
10 International Standards. It's a long process for us
11 in the Buildings Department, and then it comes to the
12 Council. So there's always some amount of lag time
13 between when the standards and the new codes come
14 out, and when we adopt them in New York City by Local
15 Law.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: You said one
17 of the last. The lawyer remains curious as to that
18 qualification. What--what else is out there
19 potentially in terms of safety codes that have not
20 yet been adopted some 14 years later?

21 HELEN GITELSON: I--I can't remember off
22 the top of my head. I know that the last--in 2008,
23 we adopted a number of--of recommendations that were
24 in the draft proposal. And then this--in the draft
25 MIS Study because in 2007, when the Local Law came

2 out to adopt the 2008 Code, the MIS report had not
3 yet been finalized. So we had--we reached forward
4 and grabbed some of those in the 2008 code process.
5 And this code process enacted many of the others. I
6 can give you a list of the proposals, and which ones
7 we have adopted when. I just don't have that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: If you
9 wouldn't mind sending me--

10 HELEN GITELSON: Sure.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --a letter--

12 HELEN GITELSON: [interposing] Sure.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --as to which
14 proposals have been adopted, and which have not yet
15 been adopted, and what's the time line on having
16 those final safety proposals adopted, I'd certainly
17 appreciate that.

18 HELEN GITELSON: Sure.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you
20 very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Any other questions
22 from Twitter?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: No, it's--
24 [laughter] NYCGreenfield, Mr. Chairman, in case
25 you're wondering. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Chair
3 Greenfield. Any other questions from the panel? All
4 right, seeing none, we're going to excuse this panel
5 and move onto our next item. I believe that no one
6 else is here to testify on the Stairwells Amendment.
7 So okay. So I'm going to close this hearing and I'm
8 going to get that information to Council Member
9 Garodnick and to the committee. And I'm going to
10 move onto the next item. The next item is Land Use
11 No. 202, 2702 West 15th Street in Brooklyn [coughs]
12 in Council Member Treyger's district. Testifying
13 here today is Joshua Rinesmith and Walter Marin I
14 believe I got that right. Gentlemen, welcome.
15 Please. I know you guys look like loud speakers, you
16 know. Talk loudly, clearly. Just make sure you
17 state your name when you speak, and please describe
18 this application. Which the panel should know
19 Council Member Treyger was here earlier, and said has
20 his full support. Gentlemen.

21 JOSH RINESMITH: Oh, I'm sorry. Good
22 morning. My name is Josh Rinesmith from the firm of
23 Warshaw Burstein, and I'm land use counsel for the
24 applicant. I'm joined here this morning by Walter
25 Marin, who is the project architect. This was an

1 application that was filed to allow the construction
2 of a new commercial building within the special Coney
3 Island mixed-use district. The property is also
4 located within an M12 zoning district. The special
5 Coney Island mixed-use district is a precursor to our
6 current MX zoning districts. It was enacted back in
7 1975. The reason we need a special permit is that
8 any new development at this site, which is a zoning
9 law that exceeds 900 square feet, requires a special
10 permit from the City Planning Commission. This would
11 e both for commercial, manufacturing and/or
12 residential uses, all of which are permitted at the
13 location. The applicant is an affiliate of St.
14 Petersburg Global Trade House, which is a retailer of
15 Russian literature, books, music as well as
16 souvenirs, and they have retail locations in Brighton
17 Beach as well as Gravesend in Manhattan. In addition
18 to the--the special permit to allow the construction
19 of any building, we're also requesting a waiver of an
20 open area requirement along a small portion of the
21 side lot line. The reason that we need this waiver
22 is it allows the configuration--the most efficient
23 configuration of the building. The building will be
24 three stories, have 24,000 square feet of floor area,
25

2 and a height of 45 feet. All of which complies with
3 the M12 zoning district regulations. I'd be happy to
4 answer any questions that you may have.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.

6 As I mentioned, Council Member Treyger was hear
7 earlier this morning, but could not say. But did
8 express his support of this project. Anyone on the
9 panel have a question for these two gentlemen?
10 You're getting off easy. Thank you. We appreciate
11 it. You are excused.

12 JOSH RINESMITH: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Is anyone else here
14 to testify on 2702 West 15th Street? Nobody has
15 answered. So we are going to close this hearing, and
16 before we move onto the main event of the day--

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: [off mic] We need to
18 take care of some votes. [sic]

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm sorry. So
20 before we do that, we're going to--we're going to
21 take care of some votes. We did have a hearing
22 recently on Land Use Nos. 189, 190 and 191, which is
23 in Council Member Johnson's district, 505 West 43rd
24 Street. It is a Zoning Text Amendment, and two

2 special permits to allow for a residential
3 development.

4 [pause]

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: A residential
6 development over a rail cut of the Amtrak Railride--
7 Railway in Manhattan's Clinton Special District.

8 [pause]

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We have
10 modifications here I want to read into the record.
11 The development will be achieving a floor area bonus
12 through the provision of affordable housing under the
13 Zoning Resolution Inclusionary Housing Program. The
14 Subcommittee held a public hearing, as I mentioned on
15 May 24th--March 24th, 2015. These applications are
16 now front--in front of the Subcommittee for a vote
17 with the two modifications recommended below.
18 Subsequent to City Planning's approval of these
19 actions, it was determined by Amtrak that the
20 emergency vent approved by CPC as a permitted rear
21 yard obstruction needed to be a larger size. As
22 approved, the vent was approximately 22 feet wide and
23 17 feet long. And it has been determined by Amtrak
24 that for safety reasons, that the vent must be
25 enlarged by approximately 37 feet and 17 feet. I

2 would note that the enlarged vent would be screened
3 in the same manner as the smaller one. It is,
4 therefore, recommended that we vote to modify the
5 plan to increase the size of this emergency vent, as
6 described.

7 The second modification proposes the
8 elimination of parking spaces in the building.
9 Twenty-one parking spaces on the ground floor were
10 approved by CPC. These accessory parking spaces are
11 permitted, but not required under the Zoning
12 Resolution. And after discussions with Council
13 Member Johnson and the applicant, they have agreed to
14 eliminate the parking spaces. Which will allow for
15 approximately three additional affordable units to be
16 generated by the project. It is, therefore,
17 recommended that we vote to modify the plans to
18 eliminate the ground floor parking to allow this
19 increased residential floor area. And those are the
20 modifications we are asking to include. So I'm not--
21 we are going to lay aside the--the Stairwells Text
22 Amendment we just heard. And we're going to take
23 that off the agenda temporarily, and I'm to couple
24 the following items in order to vote on this before
25 we get to the One Vanderbilt.

2 Land Use 189, 190 and 191, which I just
3 mentioned West 43rd Street applications with the
4 modifications that I just described. Land Use Nos.
5 195, Otto's Tacos, the unenclosed sidewalk cafe.
6 Land Use No. 196, Dominique Ansel Kitchen, an
7 unenclosed sidewalk cafe; and Land Use No. 202, the
8 special permit for 2702 West 15th Street in Council
9 Member Treyger's district that we just heard. These
10 items are all coupled, and I'm going to call on
11 Counsel to please call the roll for a vote on these
12 times.

13 LEGAL COUNSEL: Chair Weprin.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I vote aye.

15 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Gentile.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I vote aye.

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Richards.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I vote aye.

19 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Reynoso.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.

21 LEGAL COUNSEL: My apologies, Council
22 Member Garodnick.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I vote aye.

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: By a vote of 5 in the
25 affirmative, 0 and no negatives, Land Use Items 195,

2 196, and 202 are approved, and Land Use Items 189,
3 190 and 191 are approved by--are approved by the full
4 Land Use Committee with the--as modified.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Super. All right.

6 [pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. We are now
8 going to take up the Vanderbilt Corridor and One
9 Vanderbilt. Just trying to a little--the items
10 straight here. These are obviously in Council Member
11 Garodnick's district. The Vanderbilt Corridor, Land
12 Use Nos. 197, 198, and the One Vanderbilt Avenue,
13 which is 199, 200 and 201. We are bringing a big
14 crowd up for this one I believe. Frank is back,
15 Ruchala, and he's going to talk louder this time.
16 Anita Laremont, Edith Hsu-Chin, all from City
17 Planning. Marc Holliday from SL Green, Rob Schiffer
18 from SL Green, Jamie Von Klemperer from SL Green, and
19 Steven Lefkowitz from SL Green. How are you all?
20 All right, everyone comfortable?

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Before we start the
22 presentation, Council Member Garodnick has asked to
23 make an opening statement. And I'm going to grant
24 him that. So Council Member Garodnick, please,
25 you've been working long and hard.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: [interposing]

You are very generous, Mr. Chairman and I will not be very long, but I wanted to thank you very much for allowing me to say a few words about the Corridor, and also about the Special Permit Application for One Vanderbilt. As you may recall, toward the end of his administration former Mayor Bloomberg proposed an extensive rezoning of East Midtown. I opposed that plan ultimately. While I shared his concerns about the quality and age of office buildings in the area, the Mayor's proposal left too many unresolved questions of air rights pricing, public real improvements and infrastructure deliverables. This was particularly troubling in the context of so much as-of-rights zoning. Last year, and with my support, Mayor de Blasio and City Planning Commissioner Chair Weisbrod announced a different two-program approach to addressing the rezoning challenges in East Midtown. The first phase, which is before us today is a rezoning of Vanderbilt Avenue between 42nd and 47th Streets in which applicants can apply for a special permit to buy air rights to building up to FAR, 30 FAR. The second phase also under way, has begun with a steering committee also chaired by

2 Manhattan Borough President Gail Brewer and myself to
3 study the needs of Greater Midtown, and to recommend
4 to the Mayor how best to address those larger
5 questions. This approach will give us adequate time
6 to consider the bigger and more complicated issues.
7 I am already confident that the public is getting a
8 far better deal.

9 I want to commend the chair of the Multi-
10 Board Task Force, Lola Finkelstein, and other members
11 of both Community Boards 5 and 6, as well as our
12 Borough President Gale Brewer for their thoughts and
13 recommendations throughout this process. It is no
14 secret that the Grand Central area and Vanderbilt
15 Avenue in particular are in need of significant
16 improvements. Grand Central is one of the busiest
17 transit hubs in the world, and badly needs upgrades
18 to its infrastructure and pedestrian circulation
19 system. Sidewalks in area are far too narrow and
20 crowded, and Vanderbilt Avenue, a street directly
21 adjacent to one of the most iconic buildings in all
22 of New York City looks and feels like a back alley.
23 It is my hope that this rezoning will bring some
24 badly needed change to the area.

1 My concerns from the last term, which
2 included the fact that so much certainty was afforded
3 to the development community without any real
4 guarantees to the public, do not exist here. That's
5 because the city and the public maintain full
6 discretion to approve or deny each application
7 through a special permit. If a developer takes this
8 route, the key question here will be whether any
9 given site will deserve the density that it seeks
10 based on the improvements that it intends to make.
11 Of course, not all development sites along the
12 Vanderbilt Corridor will necessarily go after or be
13 deserving of the maximum 30 FAR. While I believe
14 this is the appropriate location for the city to
15 encourage high density development, not every site is
16 going to be worthy of the max.

17 As envisioned by the proposal, any
18 applicant along the corridor would have the burden of
19 convincing the public that the proposed
20 infrastructure improvements are worthy of the
21 additional development rights. We, in turn, will
22 demand that any improvements in area infrastructure
23 are done and delivered to the public in advance of
24 the occupancy to the building. The rules allow for
25

us on a project-by-project basis to hold any developer accountable, and we do--when we do, we can ensure truly sustainable designs and extraordinary architecture that fits within the character of Grand Central. And in conclusion, that brings me to the first private application before us. SL Green is applying for a special permit to build at 30 FAR building at One Vanderbilt. It's on Vanderbilt Avenue between 42nd and 43rd Street. As part of this proposal, SL Green is transferring development rights from the Bowery Savings Bank, which it also owns. In addition to transferring those rights, the applicant has proposed significant public space and transit improvements both on and off site estimated to cost over \$200 million. It's an impressive package of improvements, which were identified by the MTA as its top needs. It will be our role here to determine whether the projects outlined are significant enough to warrant such a larger density bonus. And, if not, what additional improvements should be delivered to the public. So Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to say a few words at the outset here. We look forward to hearing from both applicants, City

2 Planning and also SL Green, and we appreciate your
3 patience this morning.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Council
5 Member Garodnick. All right, City Planning, I guess
6 you're leading off right? Okay.

7 EDITH HSU-CHIN: All right. Thank you.
8 Thank you very much, Chair Weprin, Council Member
9 Garodnick, and all council members of the--at this
10 hearing. Good morning. My name is Edith Hsu-Chin.
11 I am the Director of the Manhattan office of the
12 Department of City Planning. I am joined here by my
13 colleagues, Frank Ruchala, Deputy Director of Zoning
14 and our General Counsel Anita Laremont. I will make
15 a presentation on the City's proposal, the
16 centerpiece of which is a text amendment to create
17 the Vanderbilt Corridor. And, of course, we will be
18 available for questions afterwards. Am I speaking
19 loudly enough for you? Yes. [laughs] Okay, so
20 first and foremost, the purpose of the Vanderbilt
21 Corridor proposal is to ensure the long-term strength
22 of the core area of East Midtown, the city's
23 preeminent commercial district. The centerpiece, as
24 I mentioned earlier--Hold on one second. Let's get
25 to the next slide--of our proposal is a Zoning Text

1 Amendment. We are creating two new special permits,
2 and we are enhancing an existing special permit. The
3 new special permits pertain to: (1) the creation of
4 a new floor area bonus called the Grand Central
5 Public Realm Improvement Bonus that will allow for
6 developments within the corridor to achieve floor
7 area bonus in exchange for major improvements to the
8 public realm including the transit network. We also
9 are creating a new special permit that deals with
10 hotel use, and the existing special permit we are
11 enhancing is the Grand Central Sub-District Landmark
12 Transfer. I'll talk about all these in a little bit
13 more detail later. There is also a city map
14 amendment that the city is proposing for one block of
15 Vanderbilt Avenue between 42nd and 43rd. And this
16 would be the precursor for the permanent--for the
17 permanent improvement of that space into
18 pedestrianized zone.

19
20 Before we get into the proposal, I think
21 it's very important to provide some background on
22 East Midtown, and why the Zoning Proposal is so
23 critical. Vanderbilt Corridor, the five blocks
24 bounded by 42nd Street to the south, 47th to the
25 north, Madison Avenue on the west, and Vanderbilt

2 Avenue on the east. It is the heart of East Midtown.
3 It is immediately adjacent to the Grand Central
4 Terminal. East Midtown is--are, as I mentioned
5 earlier, the powerhouse of all of our commercial
6 districts. It has over 70 million square feet of
7 office space, about a quarter million jobs. It is a
8 huge tax base for the city providing--providing a tax
9 base to provide municipal services to all five
10 boroughs. And it is, of course, a regional transit
11 hub. The strength of the area as a commercial
12 district is, of course, based on its role as a
13 transit hub. The area has incredible transit access
14 as it's anchored by Grand Central Terminal, and the
15 subway station. On a daily basis, it seems over 600
16 trips--600,000 trips and transfers. So this is
17 second only to Penn Station in terms of volume of
18 bringing commuters, workers, visitors into the city.
19 Recognizing the importance of this area in the city,
20 the public sector has continued to invest billions of
21 dollars into the infrastructure. We have major
22 infrastructure projects namely the Second Avenue
23 Subway and, of course, the East Side Access Project,
24 which will prove a one-seat ride for Long Island
25 Railroad commuters coming into the area.

Now throughout most of the past century, East Midtown has flourished as a commercial district. But within the past two decades and in the most recent past there's been a virtual halt in commercial development in the area, and this is reason for great concern. This poses serious long-term challenges to the area in terms of its long-term competitiveness as a world class business district. Every highly competitive business district has a full spectrum of office space, which includes most certainly the very best in office construction, design, and sustainability. In East Midtown, we've seen only-- we've seen very little construction in the past 20 years. Only five percent of the 70 million square feet of office space was constructed within the past 20 years. There's only been one major new development in the past--since the 1990s. The average age of buildings, as I'm sure you've all heard the statistic is about 75 years old in the area. The buildings have--many of the buildings have outdated structural features, very low floor to ceiling heights, and numerous interior columns. This is not the kind of office space that many of today's perspective tenants are looking for. The area also

2 has some serious pedestrian and transit network
3 challenges. There are narrow sidewalks, and most
4 notably there is congestion, serious congestion at
5 the Grand Central Lex Line. So just to take a moment
6 on that. Excuse me. I'll take a moment on that a
7 few moments--a few moments later. The main issue
8 here, and the one that we can deal with the zoning.
9 The current regulations is East Midtown are simply
10 obsolete. In short, the basic maximum FAR in East
11 Midtown is 15 FAR on the avenues, or 12 FAR in the
12 mid-block. This is not enough to incentivize new
13 development as many of the buildings in the area are
14 already at 15 FAR or greater. So as you can
15 understand, the--as of right maximum FAR serves as a
16 barrier as a disincentive for redevelopment.

17 More recently in 1992, again the--excuse
18 me--the base FARs were established in 1982. More
19 recently in 1992, the city tried to induce
20 development by creating the Grand Central Sub-
21 district, which had two major goals. Number one, to
22 induce high density development around the transit
23 hub, and number two, it would do that by encouraging
24 the transfer of development rights from area
25 landmarks. So primarily from Grand Central Terminal,

2 which has a great deal of unused development right.
3 But in the last 20 years of the two million square
4 feet of floor area available in the--from landmarks
5 in the sub-district, only about a quarter of it has
6 been transferred. There is remaining approximately
7 1.5 million square feet of unused landmark
8 development rights in the area.

9 The City strongly supports facilitating
10 landmarks to transfer their unused development
11 rights. And we think this is a very important thing
12 to address in our proposal. As Council Member
13 Garodnick mentioned earlier, of course there was a
14 previous proposal for East Midtown under the last
15 mayoral administration. And I won't dwell on this
16 slide as Council Member Garodnick has already
17 outlined the concerns that were raised at the
18 previous proposal that ultimately led to the city's
19 withdrawal of that proposal. But here we are soon
20 after the withdrawal of the 2013 East Midtown
21 Proposal. Then Mayor Elect de Blasio committed his
22 incoming administration to take a fresh look at East
23 Midtown. And the direct result of that fresh look
24 are two planning processes following on two separate
25 tracks. One on accelerated track. This one

2 Vanderbilt Corridor, and the second the East Midtown
3 Planning Process. Again, Council Member Garodnick
4 did touch upon that. So I won't dwell on this slide,
5 but there--we expect to hear from the steering
6 committee, which is led by Council Member Garodnick
7 and Borough President Brewer. And ten members--ten
8 representatives of key stakeholders in the area. We
9 expect to hear recommendations for a planning
10 framework later this spring. Perhaps in early
11 summer. And the city will use the recommendations as
12 a basis for future study, and a future ULURP. We
13 look forward to hearing the recommendations.

14 Why it's so important to move on
15 Vanderbilt Corridor. There are primarily three key
16 and inter-related reasons. First and foremost, there
17 are known near-term development sites. You will, of
18 course, hear from SL Green today. They are proposing
19 development on the southern block also known as One
20 Vanderbilt--One Vanderbilt. The MTA also has a site
21 that is out on an RFP right now. The MTA has an RFP
22 to solicit responses for future, the for future
23 redevelopment of that site. It's the middle block,
24 the third block bounded by 44th and 45th Street on
25 the west side of that block. Those are two very

1 prominent and visible known near-term development
2 sites. In the area there are--there's a limited
3 ability for landmarks to transfer on these
4 development rights. Which I mentioned earlier, this
5 is another very important issue for us to address
6 here. And there are immediate transit and public
7 realm challenges, which we think should be improved
8 right away. The most prominent and here we are the
9 challenges in the Grand Central Subway Station. I
10 think we all know that experience of coming off the
11 subway in the morning and getting on that crowded
12 platform, trying to make your way up the stairs, up to
13 the Mezzanine, up to the street. It is very
14 congested. The MTA would love to run more trains
15 through the station on a daily basis. However, they
16 cannot because they cannot move riders quickly and
17 safety enough. This is the bottleneck to the Lex
18 Line. If improvements can be made to this subway
19 station, we will see improvements to the entire Lex
20 Line and to commuters all around the city and, in
21 fact, the region.

22
23 So getting to our proposal, in developing
24 our proposal, number one, we addressed the concerns
25 that were raised in the 2013 proposal head on, and we

2 cam up with a proposal that number one is primarily a
3 discretionary review proposal. And most importantly,
4 it provides the certainty that the public and all
5 stakeholders are looking for when it is reviewing--
6 when it is reviewing potential infrastructure
7 improvements. The centerpiece for our text amendment
8 is the new special permit called the Grand Central
9 Public Realm Improvement bonus. What this special
10 permit does is it allows an increase of floor area
11 from 15 FAR to 30 FAR. And this is through the
12 provision of major infrastructure and public realm
13 improvements. Those improvements can be on site or
14 off site, at grade or below grade. A very key point:
15 In order for the bonus full area to be occupied in
16 the building, in order for the TCO to be secured, the
17 completion of the improvements are required. So this
18 gives the certainty with respect to timing and
19 ensures to the public that the infrastructure
20 improvements will be delivered online in advance or
21 at the same time as the density. The proposal must
22 meet site planning, building mass and sustainable
23 design requirements. This is the first time in
24 zoning we will--we will--we have sustainability
25 requirements. And this special permit is based on a

1 longstanding bonus mechanism. You may be familiar
2 with the Subway Improvement Bonus Mechanism, which
3 has delivered more than 10 major subway station
4 improvements throughout the city including at Union
5 Square, at Columbus Circle and at Court Square in
6 Queens. We've had this special permit mechanism on
7 the books since the 1980s, and we view our new Public
8 Realm Improvement Bonus for the Vanderbilt Corridor
9 to be the next generation of this important bonus
10 mechanism.
11

12 Second, in support of our efforts to
13 enhance the ability of landmark owners to transfer
14 unused development rights, we're proposing two major
15 modifications to existing special permits for
16 landmark transfer. Number one, we are raising the
17 maximum FAR available to receiving sites in the
18 Vanderbilt Corridor from 21.6 to 30 FAR. Second, we
19 are eliminating the requirement for an infrastructure
20 improvement as part of that landmark transfer
21 transaction. So these are two major improvements to
22 the existing special permit.

23 A note on density. 30 FAR we've heard
24 some comments about 30 FAR being a relatively high
25 number. I think it's very important to stress that

2 the size of the building is a function not just of
3 the FAR, but also of the zoning lot. And here in the
4 Vanderbilt Corridor, we have relatively small zoning
5 lots even at a full block size when you compare to
6 them to other major commercial sites in the city such
7 as Lower Manhattan or in Hudson yards. So the
8 maximum density at 30 FAR along the Vanderbilt
9 Corridor will get you at the most 1.3 million zoning
10 square feet, which when you compare it to other
11 developments, other recent commercial developments in
12 the city is actually slightly less. Just by way of
13 example, one in Bryant Park the Bank of American
14 headquarters. That is approximately 2.2 million
15 square feet. Although it's actually calculated
16 around 23 FAR. Any proposed building at 30 FAR in
17 the Vanderbilt Corridor would be smaller than that
18 building, any building at the World Trade Center or
19 at Hudson Yards.

20 Third, we are proposing a new special
21 permit pertaining to hotel use. During the 2013,
22 Midtown Proposal, we heard a lot of concern about
23 whether or not hotel use should be allowed as of
24 right. You know, we are proposing that any new
25 construction hotel or any conversion to hotel use

2 must go through a special permit. And this is to
3 ensure that the new hotel use will be in line, will
4 be suitable with the character of the area as a
5 business district. So this special permit will
6 ensure that hotels provide full array--a full array
7 of services and amenities to cater to business
8 visitors and users to the district.

9 And finally, we have a city matching that
10 will proposed the de-mapping of one block of
11 Vanderbilt from a vehicular right-of-way into a--
12 something called a public place, which will allow for
13 the future transformation of the space into a
14 beautiful gateway space befitting its immediate
15 adjacency to Grand Central Terminal. The space would
16 be--would remain in the city--in the ownership of the
17 city and under the control and jurisdiction of the
18 Department of Transportation. So that concludes my
19 presentation, and again, if you have questions I'm
20 very happy to answer them with my colleagues. Thank
21 you.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank. So it's SL
23 Green that will go now, right?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK:

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN:

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK:

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN:

4 MARC HOLLIDAY: Thank you very much, sir.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, Mr. Holliday,
6 just make sure that when you speak just to always say
7 your name if you are switching off. Thank you.

8 MARC HOLLIDAY: Will do. Good morning.

9 I'm Marc Holliday, CEO of SL Green. Thank you, Chair
10 Weprin and members of the Subcommittee for the
11 opportunity to present our development proposal for a
12 new commercial tower at One Vanderbilt. As the
13 largest owner of commercial properties in Manhattan
14 with over 26 million square feet owned and managed,
15 we care a great deal about the city zoning
16 initiatives, and the important ways they can
17 influence and improve neighborhoods and commercial
18 districts. SL Green's presence is even more
19 pronounced in East Midtown where we own approximately
20 15% of the district's commercial space across 23
21 separate properties. We have demonstrated a sincere
22 commitment to East Midtown by greatly improving all
23 of our buildings through the investment of billions
24 and billions of dollars in the acquiring, upgrading

25

2 and restoring and re-tenanting of notable Midtown
3 properties.

4 These improvements along with the
5 investments made by other building owners help to
6 make East Midtown one of the most coveted submarkets
7 for businesses wanting high quality and convenient
8 office space. We're extremely proud of the
9 substantial contributions we've made to this
10 community, and the impact it has had on the city's
11 economy. However, change is occurring that if un-
12 responded to, will risk eroding Midtown's--East
13 Midtown's locational desirability and intrinsic
14 building values. More and more businesses are
15 choosing to locate to markets that are much less
16 transit oriented in order to secure space in newly
17 constructed buildings. Frequently I talk with
18 tenants who want to be in East Midtown, but can't
19 find state-of-the-art office space that they need.
20 Many are Fortune 500 companies in the industries most
21 critical to New York's economy. They want to be
22 close to Grand Central and in the heart of our most
23 important commercial district.

24 However, many owners and developers like
25 SL Green have concluded that new development on sites

1 in East Midtown occupied by older tenant buildings is
2 extremely challenging to build at today's costs under
3 current zoning. The process of developing a spec
4 office building without a major residential component
5 is extremely demanding, costly and risky. In order
6 to keep this business district competitive and
7 highly relevant to large corporate users, we need
8 more than just repositioned older buildings. We need
9 new efficient, and environmentally sustainable state-
10 of-the-art office buildings like the one we have
11 proposed for One Vanderbilt. The Vanderbilt Corridor
12 rezoning is an important first step in revitalizing
13 East Midtown and halting the corporate exodus from
14 our city's largest business district.

16 By allowing 30 FAR through a special
17 permit, the city is incentivizing owners to invest in
18 the kinds of buildings modern tenants are demanding
19 and investments in much needed transit and public
20 space improvements. This rezoning represents
21 sustainable transit oriented development at its best.
22 It puts density where density belongs, around one of
23 New York's busiest transit hubs. As a result, it
24 helps reduce the carbon footprint of newly
25 construction--of newly constructed buildings to

1 levels much lower that can be achieved by building in
2 more remote areas of Manhattan. The rezoning will
3 also help to modernize transit infrastructure to
4 support the creation of a 21st Century central
5 business district at Grand Central, the subway
6 platform, stairwells, escalators and corridors are
7 immensely overcrowded and increasingly difficult to
8 navigate. The situation will only get worse when
9 East Side Access opens stressing the system beyond
10 its capacity. That's why this approach much so much
11 sense, enabling the development of badly needed new
12 buildings. And also providing investment in the
13 transit system that makes the density possible. With
14 \$210 million worth of public capital designated for
15 transit and open space infrastructure upgrades, the
16 value and scale of these improvements we are making
17 in consideration for bonus density are unprecedented
18 in the city's history. Through a direct link between
19 the public improvements delivered in density bonuses
20 granted--density bonus granted, this plan balances
21 the infrastructure needs of the public with the
22 economic objectives of the developer. And this
23 approach helps to preserve the district's history.
24 Allowing us to design One Vanderbilt to respect the
25

2 terminal and other historic neighbors, and utilize
3 air rights transferred from the Bowery Savings Bank
4 Building at 110 East 42nd Street, a landmark building
5 that was also restored by SL Green. We believe One
6 Vanderbilt serves as a blueprint to other developers
7 for the vast amount of public improvement required
8 for bonus density. This is, in my opinion, the
9 future of unsubsidized market rate commercial
10 development in Manhattan. Since we've begun the
11 public review process in October, we've engaged in a
12 robust and productive discussion about this project.
13 Thank you to Planning Commission Chair Carl Weisbrod,
14 the City Planning Commissioner, Borough President
15 Brewer and the members of the Multi-Board Task Force,
16 and to our partner organizations at the Coalition for
17 a better Grand Central. All of whom support
18 improving the commute for the hundreds and thousands
19 of riders that use the terminal each and every day.
20 Now, I would like to introduce our team's next
21 presenter, the LEED Design Architect for the One
22 Vanderbilt Project Jamie Von Klemperer.

23 JAMES VON KLEMPERER: Hello, James Von
24 Klemperer, Design Principal, Kohn Pedersen Fox. Our
25 offices are just a few blocks away from the site. So

2 if you look at the site, it reinforces the point that
3 City Planning made just a moment ago about the fact
4 that is red site, it's marked in red this is the very
5 center of one of New York's two great transit hubs.
6 And the argument for high density development right
7 near Placer Transit only makes sense not only in New
8 York but worldwide. This is a trend. Also, along
9 this belt of 42nd Street resides some of the great
10 pieces of architecture of Manhattan's high-rise
11 building type. That includes the Times Tower, One
12 Bank of America and, of course, the Chrysler
13 Building. You can see here from this diagram that
14 rather than choosing an architecture of a boxy
15 nature, we've chosen for strategic reasons to
16 emphasize the tapering of the tower so that light and
17 air can come down to the street below for the
18 enjoyment and the wellbeing of the neighborhood.
19 Next. And so you see here in a wooden model showing
20 that the proposed tower adjacent to Grand Central
21 Terminal also pairing in a way with the Chrysler
22 Building so there's a sympathetic kind of
23 relationship between these two slender forms
24 bracketing the open space created by the low and cap
25 type. The landmark of the terminal. Now, the--next-

1 -the view from the viaduct looking back along 42nd
2 Street at the base of this building demonstrates a
3 kind of openness of the architecture in gesturing
4 welcoming space facing the more closed architecture
5 of the stone box of Grand Central Terminal. Next.
6 Or, looking from Madison Avenue and 42nd Street
7 intersection back towards the east towards Grand
8 Central Terminal because of the way this building
9 appears to lift itself up visually, and present a
10 series of transparent and open spaces one can now see
11 or will be able to see the corner of the terminal
12 that had been buried, and or has been buried visually
13 from this prospect from view for the last 100 years.
14 Next.

16 Coming out of the Kitty Kelly Ramp at the
17 southwest corner of Grand Central Terminal, one will
18 be able to see then this rather open aspect of a
19 glass atrium of commercial space, retail space and of
20 the entry to the office tower itself. It is meant to
21 be a very visually welcome open transparent
22 experience. Next. The material of the shaft of the
23 tower, the body of the building going all the way up
24 to the top will be clad in its larger spandrel
25 horizontal area shown on the left with a cream

2 colored warm textured terra cotta material. This is
3 in order to present the kind of harmonious response
4 to the kind of historically appreciated buildings
5 such as the Lincoln Building in this station
6 district. As well as to create a relationship--a
7 material relationship with Grand Central Terminal.
8 Next.

9 And then facing from the northeast from
10 the portico share of Grand Central Terminal back
11 towards the building, we see in early rendering form
12 with the green wall potential or some other artwork a
13 space which would be designated as a transit hall, a
14 publicly accessible space. And the team has taken
15 great care to work closely, of course, with City
16 Planning but also with the community board to talk
17 about the most effective public use of this space to
18 everybody's benefit. Next. And then finally, this
19 cut-away section perspective diagram shows you the
20 strategic hinge pin that this public space within the
21 tower's footprint. And how it will function to bring
22 together transit and public use from the left hand
23 side, from the terminal. And then, from below East
24 Side Access to the right. So it is truly a public

2 amenity within this private tower. Thank you very
3 much.

4 ROB SCHIFFER: Good morning. I'm Rod
5 Schiffer, Managing Director at SL Green Realty Corp.
6 Thank you Chair Weprin and members of the
7 Subcommittee for the opportunity to outline the
8 public improvements and benefits we are proposing as
9 part of our plan for One Vanderbilt. One Vanderbilt
10 is a 30 FAR building that utilizes both a transfer of
11 air rights from the landmark and the Proposed Public
12 Realm Improvement Bonus. Concurrent with the
13 development of the building, SL Green is proposing to
14 finance and construct Grand Central's highest
15 priority capital needs identified by the MTA and the
16 Department of City Planning. A world class team of
17 professionals estimates that these improvements will
18 cost \$210 million, a number verified by the MTA.
19 However, this is not a \$210 cash contribution into
20 some District Improvement Fund. We are constructing
21 these improvements with our contractors, and we are
22 responsible for cost overruns and on-time delivery.
23 In fact, One Vanderbilt's tenants cannot occupy the
24 bonus space until the improvements are complete.
25 Most importantly, you'll soon see, these

2 improvements deliver value above and beyond their
3 costs to New York City's residents and commutes. The
4 first component of the improvement packages is off-
5 site at the 4, 5, 6 Grand Central Subway Station.
6 Peak hour 4, 5 trains are over capacity and Grand
7 Central is the bottleneck. Overcrowding on the
8 platform prevents riders from disembarking, causing
9 the trains to remain in the station and causing
10 delays up and down the entire line from the Bronx to
11 Brooklyn. Here's an all too familiar scene. Large
12 column closures in wide stairwells create pinch
13 points making it very difficult for commutes to
14 disembark from the train. Painful to watch.

15 [background comments]

16 ROB SCHIFFER: So, how do we solve
17 overcrowding? WE can't move the tracks and we can't
18 widen or lengthen the platforms. New York City
19 Transit engineers have studied the problem, and
20 identified a four-prong solution that SL Green will
21 implement to alleviate over-crowding. First, reduce
22 those wide column enclosures, and we'll optimize
23 staircases to maximize the amount of pedestrian
24 circulation space on the platform. Second, we'll add
25 stairs to the north and south ends of the platform to

2 distribute commuters more evenly. Third, on the
3 Mezzanine level, we'll eliminate physical and visual
4 obstacles that prevent commuters from accessing
5 under-utilized and much crowded portions of the
6 station. Finally, we'll an improved street access to
7 those under-utilized portions. The net result is one
8 more peak hour train through the station. Here you
9 can see the existing situation with wide columns, and
10 wide stairwells. And that's what it looks like as
11 improved. Next you'll see the areas on the Mezzanine
12 that are physical and visual obstacles, and here's
13 what it looks like as improved. Again, the net
14 result is one more train per peak hour through the
15 station. A significant accomplishment that adds
16 valuable time for New Yorkers to spend at work or
17 with their families.

18 The next package is on site. When East
19 Side Access comes online, it will bring half of Penn
20 Station's riders into grand central doubling the
21 number of commuters that pass through the terminal.
22 One quarter of those riders want to head to points
23 south, southwest or to make transit to transit
24 connections. With One Vanderbilt, these riders will
25 enter into Grand Central Terminal through the crowded

2 dining concourse, and use the same stairs, ramps, and
3 escalators currently used by Metro North riders. Per
4 the MTA's own EIS, this will result in levels of
5 service that are completely unacceptable. One
6 Vanderbilt is uniquely situated to solve this
7 problem. Creating a direct connection from East Side
8 Access to 42nd Street and the subway station allowing
9 that wave of East Side Access riders to reach their
10 destinations without entering into the terminal. It
11 will also ease a burden of shuttle riders by
12 providing a direct connection from the shuttle
13 platform to the street. And will also create, as
14 Jamie mentioned, a place for commuters, tourists, and
15 the community to meet and rest in a new public
16 transit hub. Rather than bore you trying to explain
17 these diagrams that we have, please sit back and grab
18 some popcorn.

19 [pause]

20 ROB SCHIFFER: A view of One Vanderbilt
21 from across 42nd and Vanderbilt, and the two access
22 points into the transit system. The transit hub and
23 42nd Street vestibule. [sic] Commuters are colored
24 by origin. So light blue and dark blue represent
25 East Side Access. We're now at 43rd Street looking

at the Transit Hall. East Side Access is below.

Almost 6,000 per peak hour will be using this access

point, and these escalators to connect points south

and southwest. Here's our direct connector, which

connects East Side Access on 42nd Street subway

station. Some 8,000 people will be using this

connection each peak hour. Without it, these people

would be using the Kitty Kelly Ramp and other crowded

areas of Grand Central Terminal. Here's the

direction to the 4, 5, 6 and the shuttle, as well as

direct connection from the shuttle platform up

through those stairs and escalators to 42nd Street.

And here's what those spaces will look like.

Translucent panels in the lobby let daylight in.

Color pallet and material are consistent with Grand

Central Terminal. And this is a view of the Transit

Hall, an iconic glass jewel box with soaring ceiling

heights, places to sit and a train board. Finally

open space. We all know that Midtown East is devoid

of open space. Sidewalks are congested and bus lanes

on Madison do not help. Vanderbilt Avenue already

under-utilized serves as a parking lot for the MTA

and is right for re-purpose. One Vanderbilt will

increase the adjacent Madison Avenue sidewalk by over

2 50%. SL Green will create an iconic public plaza
3 between 42nd and 43rd Street that will serve as a
4 new front door to Grand Central. Here's what the
5 sidewalk looks like today, and here's what it looks
6 like as improved by One Vanderbilt. Here's
7 Vanderbilt Avenue today. As Council Garodnick has
8 said, it feels like a back alley. And here's our
9 vision for the plaza. Design elements are embedded
10 in the hardscape allowing for maximum pedestrian flow
11 and emergency vehicle access. And here's what the
12 plaza might look like at night. As you can see here,
13 we have a unique opportunity to restore grandeur to
14 Grand Central.

15 Finally, the economic benefits of One
16 Vanderbilt are great. We will create 5,200
17 construction and 190 permanent good paying middle-
18 income jobs with the unions that power the real
19 estate and construction industries. As others will
20 describe in more detail shortly, One Vanderbilt
21 utilizes programs that ensure diversity in its
22 workforce. And One Vanderbilt will generate \$42
23 million of annual incremental real estate taxes, and
24 six-time increase over what's in place today. In
25 order to meet the moving date of our anchor tenant,

1 we must begin structural demolition this fall being
2 vertical in 2017 and complete the building in 2020
3 coincident with the completion of our public
4 improvements. One Vanderbilt has overwhelming
5 support from a broad based group that you'll hear
6 from today, including the major unions, transit
7 riders, advocacy groups and civic groups who all have
8 a vested interest in seeing One Vanderbilt and its
9 substantial improvements realized. Thank you for the
10 opportunity to speak.

12 STEPHEN LEFKOWITZ: Chair Weprin, members
13 of the Council, I'm Stephen Lefkowitz from the Law
14 Firm of Fried Frank representing the Developer SL
15 Green this morning, and I'm here to describe the
16 three applications for special permits that are
17 before this committee. The first is an application
18 under Section 81635, an existing provision of the
19 Zoning Resolution permitting transfer of unused
20 development rights from the landmark in Grand Central
21 Sub-district to a receiving site without the sub-
22 district. And here the transfer is for 2.63 FAR from
23 the landmark Bowery Savings Bank across 42nd Street.
24 As part of its application, Bowery entered into a
25 restricted declaration with the Landmarks Commission

1 requiring it to perform certain restoration work, and
2 to maintain the landmark in perpetuity. The
3 restoration work was completed several years ago.
4 It's been signed off by the Landmarks Commissioner,
5 and the applicant has met all of its obligations with
6 respect to the Landmark Bowery.
7

8 The next two applications are for special
9 permits under the New Zoning Text for the Vanderbilt
10 Corridor, which has been described to you. The first
11 is for a special permit under Section 81641 for a
12 bonus of 12.37 FAR for construction of annual public
13 realm improvements, which have been described to you
14 in detail by Rod Schiffer the previous speaker,
15 transit improvements in the public plaza, the transit
16 hall. These improvements for the subways have been
17 conceptually approved by the MTA, which is so
18 declared in a letter to the City Planning
19 Commissioner. And the MTA will speak her today about
20 the need for these improvements, and their importance
21 for the transit system. The creation of the public
22 plaza on Vanderbilt Avenue has been conceptually
23 approved by DOT. The specific design for this plaza
24 will be done through a separate public process
25 managed by DOT involving the Community Board, and

1 approved by the Public Design Commission. The public
2 plaza is still a street. That is to say it's still
3 owned by the city. It's still on the city map. It
4 is being pedestrianized, and the design for that
5 pedestrian use will be managed by DOT. However, the
6 construction will be done and paid for by the
7 developer. The City Planning Commission has found
8 that this menu of public improvements meets the
9 exacting standards in the new text, and that it
10 merits a bonus of 12.37 FAR sought by the applicant.
11 And noting in passing that these public improvements
12 are magnitudes greater than any bonus improvements
13 undertaken in the past. The final special permit is
14 under a new Section 81642 to provide waivers from
15 certain bulk regulations for the new building
16 including street wall conditions, height and setback
17 regulations, retail continuity, et cetera. These
18 waivers result from the specific design of the new
19 building, which you have seen. Jamie Von Klemperer
20 described that to you. It's tempered--it's tapered
21 form. The angled corner at 42nd Street and
22 Vanderbilt Avenue to provide better views of the
23 terminal. The building has been crafted to maximize
24 light and air with the street below, and to provide a
25

2 special relationship and deference to Grand Central
3 Terminal, the most prominent building obviously in
4 the area. And also to provide some of the public
5 improvements like the new subway entrance on 42nd
6 Street and the Transit Hall on 43rd Street. The
7 building design really is constructed in order to
8 maximize its benefit at this location, and enhance
9 waivers of the regulations. And I will be glad to
10 respond to any questions that the committee may have.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Do you want to add
13 something, Mr. Holliday?

14 MARC HOLLIDAY: No, that concludes it and
15 if you have questions we certainly--

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Thank
17 you.

18 MARC HOLLIDAY: --could entertain them.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: There will be a
20 number of questions. I'll actually get started
21 because I actually want to get clear in my head some
22 things. Mr. Holliday, or any member of your team.
23 So could you describe is the 2013 plan that we had
24 talked about, how did---did this--how does this
25 differ, if at all, from the 2013 building as far as

2 what you're building the FAR and the transit
3 improvements?

4 MARC HOLLIDAY: Well, I think that the
5 bulk of the difference wise in the transit
6 improvements and the connectivity between all three
7 access points, the Grand Central, East Side Access
8 and the subway. We worked with the extra time and
9 through expenditure of far more money than we had
10 contemplated back in 2013, we made a series of
11 refinements to that plan that Rod can tell you about.
12 Most notably I think is the 42nd Street vestibule has
13 been made much larger. And, you know, much more of
14 an important feature point of the access to
15 complement the transit--the Public Transit Hall on
16 43rd Street. And, you know, were also design changes
17 that were made along the way, which were really done
18 hand-in-hand with the community boards to try and put
19 the building into even more context with Grand
20 Central and the neighborhood and the landmark
21 important--the landmark which is the nature of this--
22 of this neighborhood. So there were sacrifices made,
23 if you will, towards retail in favor of even better
24 designs. On the southeast corner of the property we
25 kind of took the bulk down, and pushed the--pushed

1 the building back somewhat from where it used to
2 reside. And changes to the lobby area to create
3 direct connectivity to the Public Transit Hall, which
4 didn't used to exist. And also to put a feature on
5 it, which with certain bronze and metal elements
6 communicate better with Grand Central Terminal. So
7 those are--those are some of the--the items that I
8 think, as I said were made--were made at great cost,
9 but I think made for a better property and for better
10 public benefits.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, and the
13 Vanderbilt Corridor will have no vehicle traffic
14 except for emergency vehicles under this plan?

15 MARC HOLLIDAY: Well, only the portion
16 that we're looking to make a plaza between 42nd and
17 43rd Street. It would be closed for exclusive use by
18 pedestrians other than for emergency vehicular
19 traffic.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Got it. Watching
21 Mr. Schiffer's video, the last--along with the color
22 coded people it seems like some science fiction movie
23 a futurist science fiction when someday we'll all be
24 color coded in where we come from. But a little
25 frightening, but let me ask this question and maybe

2 City Planning then answers it. You know, one of the
3 great things about this plan, which we're happy
4 about. I know Council Member Garodnick and many
5 people are concerned that under the other plan people
6 are paying money into a fund, but the improvements
7 were coming after the buildings. And people were
8 really concerned about that, how are we going to get
9 all of these commuters to where they have to go. So
10 that's great about this plan that the money is
11 coming, the improvements are coming before the
12 building. However, once this building goes up,
13 future buildings go up, is there a concern that even
14 though we're making all these great improvements that
15 you won't be able to accommodate all these different
16 colored people? [laughter] In his video.

17 [laughter]

18 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Well, we think it's very
19 important to have the opportunity to provide for
20 additional improvement in the Vanderbilt Corridor.
21 So, as you know, of course, the text applies to all
22 five blocks. We think it's essential because there
23 are--each of these blocks provide unique and special
24 ability to connect to the transit network. These
25 five blocks also provide the opportunity for the

2 landmark TDRs, and a project could seek both. Could
3 seek both a bonus by providing transit improvements,
4 or, you know, seek additional floor area through
5 landmark TDRs. We will hear more from the MTA later.
6 They have articulated other needs in the area that
7 could be undertaken by other developers in the area,
8 and perhaps in East Midtown depending on the future
9 recommendations of the steering committee.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We will be hearing
11 from MTA. Actually, we're probably going to bring
12 them up next after we're done with this panel to talk
13 about the specific improvements, and it's such an
14 important part of the discussion today. So we'll
15 bring them up I know. So I'm just--I'm just curious
16 as long as I have you here, though, you mentioned the
17 other building. So what kind of improvements do you
18 see besides having access from the buildings. And
19 what are you--what's your wish list, or what's the
20 wish list that MTA is going to come with to--about
21 what improvements you would see for those plazas in
22 that area over there?

23 EDITH HSU-CHIN: There are a variety of
24 improvements that we're looking for. And we've come-
25 -we've structured our special permit so that it can

2 accommodate the live ride including at grade, below
3 grade, off site, and on site. You know, we don't
4 have a crystal ball to determine exactly--exactly
5 what the specifics of those improvements should be.
6 But we think it's very important to maintain
7 flexibility. So as, you know, the--we meet the
8 future, we can meet the future needs. I do want to
9 say, and I probably can't emphasize this enough.
10 This is precisely where density belongs. We are at
11 transit. We are already--we are at the city's
12 densest job center. We think that this is exactly
13 where high density growth should be located, and they
14 should come with improvements to the public realm.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, I'm going to
16 turn it over to Council Member Garodnick who had some
17 questions, you said, right? He's been working very
18 long and hard on this. I do want to point out we've
19 been joined by very important people. People wearing
20 T-shirts with Hotel Trades Council on it. So that's
21 always good to see. Something we didn't see last
22 time. Council Member Garodnick.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman. I'm going to first direct my questions to
25 City Planning and then I have some questions for the

1 applicant for SL Green. Some of the concerns that
2 have been raised by the community, and certainly I
3 have raised a number of these, too, relate to how
4 best to measure the public improvements relative to
5 the density bonuses here. That's issue one. Issue
6 two is the concern that if we afford the opportunity
7 to go to 30 FAR along the five-block stretch, will
8 that presume that a 30 FAR stretch of buildings will
9 result? So let's talk about each of those because I
10 think they're important and important for us to cover
11 today. Help us understand how we can feel certain
12 here that what is being proposed at One Vanderbilt is
13 satisfactory to entitle them to a 30 FAR building.
14 And along those same lines, how will my colleagues,
15 this will likely happen after I am term-limited.
16 But, how will my colleagues determine whether or not
17 future projects that are coming down the pike here
18 are similarly entitled or less entitled to those
19 sorts of density bonuses?

21 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Thank you, Council
22 Member. It's very important to stress that each and
23 every application that is seeking significant
24 increase in FAR on the Vanderbilt Corridor is going
25 through discretionary review. So that means case by

2 case individual review of each application, which
3 gives the City Planning Commission and the City
4 Council great authority in determining the merits of
5 the application and whether the application in the
6 case for the public improvement bonus merits the
7 floor area bonus. This is a longstanding practice
8 that we, you know, at City Planning and City Council
9 have done for decades. And it's delivered many
10 amazing buildings and superior projects throughout
11 the city. I named some of them earlier when we
12 talked about an example of the Subway Improvement
13 Bonus. It is a qualitative review, of course. There
14 are not a formula or numeric--metrics for the City
15 Planning Commission, and the City Council in
16 determining the floor area bonus. We think it's very
17 important to maintain the qualitative review, and the
18 Authority to have that qualitative review. To guide
19 the City Planning Commission and the City Council,
20 the text, as we proposed, has very exacting and
21 demanding findings. So you must find that these
22 improvements, as proposed by the developers, you
23 know, must be just to name a few qualities. They
24 much materially improve the experience of the
25 commuter moving through the station. They must be

2 generously dimension--they must be generous in
3 dimension. They must greatly enhance movement. We
4 have--the findings that we're proposing are the most
5 robust, and the most rigorous we have in any special
6 permit available in--in the Zoning Resolution.

7 [laughs]

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I don't think that
9 was a response to your answer.

10 EDITH HSU-CHIN: [laughs] That's not
11 part of my answer okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sorry. I hadn't had
13 lunch. I'm sorry. [laughter] So, in response, if I
14 understand you correctly, the--the existence of a
15 qualitative as opposed to a quantitative review for
16 such matters is something that is part of what City
17 Planning does and the Council does on a regular
18 basis. And it is spelled out you say in the tax,
19 which, of course, we will be looking at closely as we
20 go through our portion of the process as to what
21 demanding findings are actually required to be able
22 to achieve those density improvements. Let's talk
23 about that canyon of 30 FAR buildings. You know, not
24 all sites along Vanderbilt are necessarily equal.
25 You know, there is a concern that was articulated by

2 the Five-Board Task Force and others that this will
3 result in an inevitable 30 FAR canyon. Do you want
4 to address that?

5 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Not every application
6 will seek the full floor area bonus amount, and not
7 every application may receive the full FAR requested
8 amount. It will be determined by the case-by-case
9 basis. And, you know, the City Planning Commission
10 and the City Council will have to review each
11 building and make sure that it is not deleteriously
12 affecting its surrounding neighbors and the streets.
13 So, a full 30 FAR canyon well number one it's
14 probably unlikely since there are some buildings. To
15 name one, the 383 Madison building that is, you know,
16 quite significant and probably will not come down.
17 But then there are some other sites. The MTA site we
18 mentioned earlier, which is a half block. Which may
19 or may not be able to reach 30 FAR, and perhaps in
20 the future the Roosevelt Hotel site there's no known
21 development plan for that site. But in the case that
22 they were to seek a special permit for increased
23 floor area, they would have to make the case that
24 they--that the design of the building and that the

2 improvements of the building--so the specifics of
3 that proposal merit the floor area increase.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So do you think that
5 it will be appropriate for us here and also at future
6 sites to--to consider the attributes of the site
7 itself in making these determinations?

8 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Yes, absolutely.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Let me run
10 through with you a few possible areas that we might
11 want to consider here or elsewhere. And you can tell
12 me whether you think that these should be components
13 in our--in our thought process here and in the
14 future. Dual avenue frontage with wide streets?

15 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Very fair. That's
16 something we look at in zoning. You know avenue--
17 frontage on avenue generally has a different
18 treatment than frontage on a side street.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: How about direct
20 access to East Side Access?

21 FRANK RUCHALA: I believe every one of
22 the sites along this corridor has the opportunity for
23 direct access to east side.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So you would say
25 that's a fair thing for us to consider here?

2 FRANK RUCHALA: Sure.

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And, you know, why
4 don't you either do it again or have Edith--

5 FRANK RUCHALA: I'll do it this time.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Do it this time and
7 name yourself.

8 FRANK RUCHALA: Frank Rachala, Deputy
9 Director for Zoning. All of the sites in the
10 Vanderbilt Corridor have the opportunity to connect
11 to East Side Access, which sits directly below. The
12 One Vanderbilt site is proposing to do that. The MTA
13 site as part of its RFP is requiring it. Kind of the
14 future plans of other sites would need to be
15 determined at the time, but they would all have the
16 opportunity to do that.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So a fair
18 consideration in future--recurrent and future
19 applications is that correct?

20 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Yes, that's correct.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. How about
22 direct adjacency to the subway system?

23 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Direct adjacency here is
24 an interesting concept because there's so much
25 interconnectivity. So while the--a site may not sit

2 directly atop, you know, the Lex Line Subway Station,
3 it is connected to the Lex Line Subway Station. So,
4 you know, I think it's all connected here. When we
5 talk about connecting the Transit Network, we talk
6 about connecting to the rather vast network
7 underneath Grand Central.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So, you don't think
9 there's a way to make a distinction between
10 connecting to the network and connecting directly
11 into a station?

12 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Frankly, I think it's a
13 distinction we do not want to make because we think
14 that connectivity is really important and to have it
15 be expansive. So again our special permit is
16 structured to that off-site improvements are allowed
17 to qualify for bonus, and we want to make sure that
18 remains the case.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. How about
20 direct adjacency to the Grand Central, what I've
21 heard referred to as the Air Park, the Sky Plane, the
22 fact that you have a low building right--right across
23 the street?

24 FRANK RUCHALA: Again, I think that's
25 something--the way that the permit is structured is

2 not only is it about the improvements, but about the
3 building itself and the building's location, where it
4 is and what the building--how it relates to those--
5 How it relates to those contacts. So I think the
6 permit is structured to allow that to be considered
7 already.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And you think that
9 that is a fair consideration making the--

10 FRANK RUCHALA: [interposing] I think as
11 someone would look at a future application, they
12 would look at that.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And should look at
14 that.

15 FRANK RUCHALA: Right, yes, I think--

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Okay.

17 FRANK RUCHALA: --that's how we'd define
18 that.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. How about
20 adjacency to a public plaza? We have one as proposed
21 here. Presumably, that is part of the consideration
22 for City Planning in the overall context of the 12.83
23 bonus that's being suggested. Would you say that
24 that is a fair thing to consider?

2 EDITH HSU-CHIN: As a site criterion or
3 as a part of the improvement package?

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, really what
5 I'm asking about all of these is what potential
6 attributes of a site could qualify it for additional
7 density, or should qualify it potentially for
8 additional density. I'm asking whether that's one of
9 the component parts that you think we should be
10 looking at as a Council and a city as part of the
11 Vanderbilt rezoning.

12 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Well--

13 FRANK RUCHALA: [off mic] Would it be
14 less so?

15 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Yes, less so. I think
16 that's something that would be an unusual precedent.
17 I think, you know, we would certainly look at the
18 effect of any proposal on the adjacent streets and
19 sidewalks. And certainly, if that street or sidewalk
20 is also a plaza, we look at that very closely. I
21 don't know if establishing adjacency to a plaza is
22 necessarily a useful criterion in determining whether
23 floor area benefits should be available.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, and how about
3 the existence of a full city block site, as opposed
4 to a half a block or a quarter of a block?

5 EDITH HSU-CHIN: I think that's a very
6 key factor in the determination of the design and the
7 massing of the building. And as, you know, the
8 decision-makers are reviewing the building, they are
9 looking at how-- Again, how the building affects the
10 adjacent streets and sidewalks. So, certainly a full
11 block site does afford greater flexibility, and
12 greater-- Frankly, greater ability to accommodate
13 more FAR. But, you know, we've seen examples of high
14 density buildings on smaller blocks on lots less than
15 43,000 square feet. So, again, I think it--it does
16 warrant a case-by-case review.

17 FRANK RUCHALA: Just as a--in addition to
18 that, I think that that also in some respects relates
19 to the use that's proposed for the building. An
20 office building has higher floor-to-floor heights,
21 and it has other mechanical space. Other uses don't
22 have those requirements, and have lower floor-to-
23 floor heights. So, one could be looking at one
24 building at the same density, and be erratically
25 different size and shape of a building. And a hotel

2 or kind of mixed with residential as a use, for
3 example, could easily fit on a smaller site at these
4 densities and not have the same difficulty fitting it
5 as an office building. Which as I--in my earlier
6 presentation talked about things like the additional
7 elevators, and the additional stairs that are
8 required for an office building just require a
9 different site. But again, at that--that's the kind
10 of consideration on a case-by-case basis.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Got it. We
12 understand the value of case-by-case. We understand
13 your point, and I'm just trying to just narrow down a
14 little bit some of the factors that we would be
15 looking into on a case-by-case basis. And I think in
16 your answer I heard you say yes in response to my
17 question, which is that the size of the site actually
18 would be a factor that City Planning and the Council
19 should look at here and in future applications. Is
20 that correct?

21 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right. The next
23 area that I wanted to talk to you all about is the
24 public plaza. And as initially announced back in the
25 Bloomberg Administration, there is a very dramatic

2 image of Vanderbilt Avenue from 42nd to 47th Street
3 completely closed off to traffic and as a full five-
4 block pedestrian plaza. That, of course, is not what
5 is being proposed here. We have a single block that
6 would be in front of One Vanderbilt. But does the
7 city have a position as to whether or not the public
8 plaza should be extended past 43rd Street to the
9 north?

10 EDITH HSU-CHIN: At this point, no, we do
11 not have a position. I think it's--we're very
12 excited about the prospect of this one block being
13 transformed into a pedestrianized zone. Especially
14 since this block is immediately adjacent to one of
15 the busiest entry and egress points at Grand Central
16 Terminal. We all know that corner entry. I think
17 it's very--we're all very excited about this public
18 plaza, and we'll see from there. There could be
19 future opportunity for further pedestrianization of
20 Vanderbilt Avenue, but I think we'll--we'll have to
21 see as time passes.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, the--and, of
23 course, there are--there are all sorts of logistical
24 questions present--

25 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --there, which have
3 been articulated by a number of property holders
4 down--down the block. But I do think that the one
5 that is being proposed at a minimum is one that's
6 certainly--that works between a building and Grand
7 Central. The design review process for that one
8 block. This was the subject of significant
9 discussion at the borough president level. Tell us
10 what is currently the anticipated process for design
11 review of that single block between 42nd and 43rd?

12 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Okay.

13 FRANK RUCHALA: So, it will continue to
14 be City--

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I want you--I want
16 you to speak to General Washington behind, okay? I
17 want you talking to him.

18 FRANK RUCHALA: All right.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: But you don't need
20 to look at Dan. You don't need to look at him.

21 FRANK RUCHALA: It's a Monday. So the--
22 it will be--continue to be city-owned space as part
23 of the--as part of the public place designation. DOT
24 has the Plaza Program that it uses to design public
25 spaces it has kind of throughout the city. This

2 space--DOT has requested that this space go through
3 that process, too. It includes public outreach. It
4 includes design, consultation, and that's the
5 intention here. In addition, the required--the space
6 will be required to go to the Public Design
7 Commission for approval there. And, DOT's position
8 on spaces like this is that these be designed at the
9 time--close to the time of actual construction. So
10 while we're here sitting in 2015, the idea is that
11 the space would actually go through that public
12 design process. Closer to construction I think that
13 would be somewhere in 2017 or 2018.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

15 FRANK RUCHALA: [interposing] Is that
16 better?

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I think Washington
18 heard you. [laughter] The funding for maintenance
19 this is a discussion that also came up with the
20 borough president level. And as I understand it, and
21 you can correct me if I got it wrong. There was a
22 certain commitment of funds from the property
23 developer toward the maintenance of that plaza. My
24 question for City Planning is how exactly that will
25 work in terms of the operation of the funds to

2 activate the plaza, and whether you believe it is
3 sufficient funding to make this an exceptional public
4 place.

5 FRANK RUCHALA: [off mic] Should we
6 start with them?

7 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Well, I would have SL
8 Green address the--the contribution that they made
9 for the future maintenance. But I just also wanted
10 to note that this public plaza is, of course, within
11 the Grand Central Partnership BID boundaries. And as
12 such, would be part of the family of public spaces
13 that would be under its purview. That's not to speak
14 to the maintenance funding, but just to mention that
15 a BID is very much involved in the stewardship of
16 that space.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Holliday, you
18 may able just to answer this.

19 MARC HOLLIDAY: Sure.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: How exactly will
21 the, you know, where the money goes--

22 MARC HOLLIDAY: [interposing] Right.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --and how exactly
24 it's going to be allocated and used.

25

2 MARC HOLLIDAY: I think we've worked it
3 out. It's pretty straight forward. We're going to
4 build and construct. We will be responsible for the
5 day-to-day maintenance via the Grand Central
6 Partnership. We will actually be carrying out those
7 duties, and we're going to put up a \$500,000 reserve
8 for capital replacement over what's projected to be
9 the useful life of the--of the Plaza. Which,
10 hopefully, if we do our job right, you know, won't
11 even be necessary, but things happen. So, those are
12 the three components of how it gets built, maintained
13 and kept at its original standard.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Thank you,
15 and back to City Planning for a moment. On the
16 pedestrian circulation requirements, as you noted in
17 your testimony-- And by the way, Chairs, if you wish
18 to break in at any point, I have a bunch, but
19 obviously I will--you tell me when the moment is.
20 You proposed to modify the landmark transfers in the
21 Grand Central sub-district. So that the
22 infrastructure or pedestrian circulation improvement
23 requirement is entirely at City Planning's discretion
24 and can be waived. And for just to put that in
25 simple language for those who may not be zoning

2 experts, previously, there was a requirement that if
3 you transfer your rights from a landmark that you're
4 required to do pedestrian circulation improvements.
5 City Planning is proposing to make that a
6 discretionary point. So that City Planning could say
7 that is required or not required in your case-by-case
8 situation. If you could explain the rationale behind
9 that a little bit I think that certainly, you know,
10 my constituents would like to know that almost no
11 matter what you are doing on development in that
12 area, that there will be obligations on you to do
13 pedestrian circulation improvements, other
14 improvements in Grand Central. Which, of course, we
15 will demand on a case-by-case basis. But why not
16 leave that in here as one of the component parts?

17 EDITH HSU-CHIN: We view that requirement
18 for an infrastructure improvement as part of a
19 landmark transfer to be an unfair burden to that
20 landmark transfer--transaction. Normally, with a
21 landmark TDR, a special permit, in another section
22 called 7479, there is not that requirement to
23 provide, to implement an infrastructure improvement
24 on top of purchasing the development rights from a
25 landmark, from an adjacent landmark. This

2 requirement that's in the Grand Center Sub-district
3 is one of the reasons why we think the Grand Central
4 sub-district's special permit for landmark transfer
5 has not worked. In its 20 years of existence, it's
6 only been used once. There was one development that
7 went for the Landmark TDR Special Permit because--in
8 part because-- Excuse me. There was only one project
9 that went for that special permit, and after that
10 none. Because, in part, of that infrastructure
11 improvement requirement. We think it's really
12 important to eliminated it and bring it to a policy
13 standard that we have for other landmarks. Of
14 course, an infrastructure improvement if deemed
15 absolutely necessary for that site, can be required
16 as par of the special permit process.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So it's to maintain
18 the flexibility of requiring it or allowing for other
19 component infrastructure parts to take its place. Is
20 that a fair--?

21 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Yes, there will be that
22 flexibility. We are eliminating [sic] it as an
23 outright requirement, but we are allowing--we are
24 keeping it as a potential element that is required by
25

2 the discretionary view of the City Planning
3 Commission and Council.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Dan, Council Member
5 Greenfield has a follow up--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --on that same
8 question. He just asked if that's okay? Council
9 Member Greenfield.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you,
11 Mr. Garodnick. I--see, on this particular issues, I
12 was curious about that as well. I'm--we aren't
13 really--what we're doing is we're sort of allowing
14 developers in the future, right, to basically try to
15 pit City Planning improvements versus the potential
16 cost of a transfer of the ERIs. Isn't that really
17 what's going to happen as a result?

18 EDITH HSU-CHIN: No, we see these as
19 alternatives, but also, you can use these special
20 permits in combination. So, a future applicant could
21 go for--for an area bonus through the--for an area
22 bonus special permit, and also seek the Landmark TDR.
23 We actually think that future developers will opt for
24 the Landmark TDR special permit because it is a much
25 more straightforward process in that there is not

2 identification of infrastructure improvements working
3 with the City and the MTA to establish where those
4 improvements are. And the timing of those
5 improvements. As you have heard from the SL Green
6 team today, they are on the hook for the
7 implementation and any cost overruns. There is a
8 high degree of risk in undertaking infrastructure
9 improvements. We think that future developers will
10 readily opt for a special permit where--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]
12 Right.

13 EDITH HSU-CHIN: --there's simply a
14 transaction to--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]
16 Well, I think--

17 EDITH HSU-CHIN: --purchase development
18 rights.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I think we
20 agree Council Member Garodnick and I. I think that's
21 actually our concern, which is what you have so
22 clearly articulated. To be fair, I'm very
23 comfortable with the current project being proposed.
24 And I think the developers have gone to extraordinary
25 lengths to accommodate the community and to make it

2 a--a very significant improvement by any objective
3 standard. I think our greater concern, although I'm
4 sure the Council member has issues on the projects
5 that he'd like to discuss as well is the precedent
6 going forward. And to a certain extent by--by no
7 longer requiring these improvements attached to the
8 air rights effectively, really what we're doing is
9 we're creating sort of a very simple bargaining
10 situation. Where a developer comes in and figures,
11 okay, what's it going to cost me to make improvements
12 versus what's it going to cost me to get the air
13 rights. And to make the decisions based on that, and
14 not necessarily the improvements, which I think is
15 something we all agree we want to encourage. So I
16 sort of share Council Member Garodnick's concern, and
17 that's why I wanted to hone in on it. And that's
18 sort of my perspective. What say you?

19 EDITH HSU-CHIN: We have more than one
20 public policy goal here in the city we can establish,
21 and we do establish multiple zoning mechanisms to
22 achieve those different goals. You know, as I
23 mentioned earlier, there is approximately 1.5--
24 actually 1.35 million square feet of unused
25 development rights for landmarks in the area. That

2 number it's--it could be extinguished over, you know,
3 a handful of projects. At the same time, you know,
4 we have projects that are sitting atop of this
5 incredible transit network. So we do foresee that
6 developers in many cases will choose to plug into the
7 networks. It brings great value to their own
8 property, but we also see instances--probably most
9 instances where the public will demand. And the
10 public decision-makers will also require that
11 plugging into the transit network is part of that
12 proposal.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. So
14 just a final point on-- You mentioned that this is
15 one of the issues with the transfer of air rights.
16 Isn't it also fair to say that due to the spot--due
17 to the location of where these air rights are located
18 that some folks may have engaged in speculative
19 purchase of air rights and have, therefore hoarded
20 it. And as a result maybe that also didn't allow for
21 development to take place in the same fashion that
22 perhaps you anticipate? And is there anything that
23 you're doing on that end to prevent that particular
24 scenario?

25 [pause]

2 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Let me--I don't think I
3 totally understood your question. Would you repeat
4 that please?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I wish we had
6 a translator.

7 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Oh, okay, thank you.
8 Okay. [laughs]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah. My
10 point is that I don't think that the only reasons
11 that the developers haven't--that the developers
12 haven't-- I would disagree with your point, which is
13 that you're saying that the developers decided not to
14 develop, and you couldn't transfer the air rights
15 because they had to engage in these infrastructure
16 improvements. I'm not convinced that's the case.

17 EDITH HSU-CHIN: [interposing] Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I think that
19 as a result what ended up happening was some folks
20 ended up purchasing these air rights speculatively.
21 And they ended up hoarding the air rights. And
22 that's what resulted in a lack of development, as
23 opposed to the concern over infrastructure so it--

24 EDITH HSU-CHIN: [interposing] I
25 understand.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --merely
3 reinforces my point, which is Council Member
4 Garodnick's point is that infrastructure, which we
5 all agree should be at a premium, and is being done
6 in this case under LS Green. That perhaps we should
7 be more considerate of that as part of your quarter
8 Corridor rezoning.

9 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Thank you. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Holliday, did
11 you want to add--he may want to add his own comments
12 on this. It looked like you were reaching, right?
13 Did you want to add? I--I thought.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [laughs] No.

15 EDITH HSU-CHIN: [interposing] Yeah.
16 May I first just comment?

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sure.

18 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Thank you very much for
19 the clarification. We create zoning proposals
20 irrespective of ownership of property, or of
21 development rights. So the elimination of the
22 requirement for the infrastructure improvement is
23 something that we have--we diagnosed as a problem a
24 long time ago, and it's something that we have wanted
25 to implement, and we see it's the right thing to do

2 and the fair thing to do. These are the other
3 landmark transfer policy--policies.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Did you
5 want to add something.

6 MARC HOLLIDAY: I--I think the Council
7 Member has said it all.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Do you agree
9 with what the Council Member said?

10 MARC HOLLIDAY: [laughs] Look, we're in
11 the business of redeveloping and developing
12 properties. And to do that, in an area like Grand
13 Central, which is completely built out, it comes at
14 great cost. So just to do our one project, we had to
15 assemble four different properties. Starting in 2011
16 start to think through our planning. Ultimately, we
17 had to buyout and/or relocate 191 tenants. And then,
18 on top of that, [coughs] you know, all these sub-
19 grade improvements in exchange for the density bonus.
20 So clearly, the costs involved with these transit
21 improvements are, you know, exorbitant, but they're
22 necessary. And, you know, we're--we're happy to be
23 making them. Whether others will or will not follow
24 in our footsteps we'll see. But hopefully we're
25 laying down a blueprint for the future for doing

2 that. But, you know, it is yet to be seen how many
3 other developers want to travel down that road to get
4 to 30 times FAR because it is not only quite costly.
5 But it also comes with the extraordinary risks that
6 were mentioned to you earlier about completing the
7 projects on budget, on time to get a TCR, and if you
8 don't there are other things that happen from that.
9 So if there is another avenue with landmark, air
10 transfers. And I think that will be some an
11 attractive alternative to either do in isolation, or
12 do as part of this bonus density transfer mechanisms
13 that are being set up here. You know, hopefully as
14 part of this ULURP proceeding. But that does mean
15 you need a willing seller of those air rights. And,
16 you know, I think to the extent that as part of, you
17 know, future zoning that other landmark properties
18 are brought into that fray to create a bit of a
19 market as opposed to self-sourcing. I think will go
20 a long ways towards seeing that become a reality in
21 the future

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, great. I'm
23 going to go back to Council Member Garodnick who has
24 a--more questions.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you, Mr.
3 Chairman. Let's talk about landmarks for a moment
4 because one of the concerns that many of us have
5 about any grand rezoning or even smaller rezoning is
6 that we-- In our desire to what we all want to do
7 here, which is to create economic opportunities, and
8 to get East Midtown unstuck from its unfortunate
9 position today that we may lose some valued historic
10 resources in the process. So I wanted to see if you
11 could speak to the steps the city has taken to review
12 other sites either along Vanderbilt Corridor, such as
13 Roosevelt Hotel, Yale Club or others, to--you know,
14 to consider the merits of these properties in advance
15 of what you're asking the Council to do here?

16 EDITH HSU-CHIN: As part of the 2013 East
17 Midtown Proposal, you will recall there was
18 participation--very strong participation from the
19 Landmarks Preservation Commission to look at the
20 broader area. And to determine what the eligible
21 buildings for future landmarking would be. So the
22 discussion was very much at the-- You know, it was
23 very much at the fore of that rezoning. And
24 certainly it's something that we're all sensitive to
25 as we proceed here. The Landmarks Commission they

2 are the expert agency on what projects should be
3 calendared for potential future designation. They
4 have been looking at the area, and they continue to
5 look at the area. Certainly, this zoning proposal,
6 and the previous proposal have put really a giant
7 magnifying glass on the area. LPC they have stated
8 that, you know, this is among the richest of
9 landmarked districts in all of the city. But with
10 this increased interest in the area, they are
11 revisiting. We expect to hear from them as part of
12 the greater East Midtown process certainly on
13 potential what other landmarks there may be in the
14 area. But we defer to them. They are the experts on
15 the merits of historic resources, and whether they
16 should be landmarks.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, we certainly
18 are pushing them hard on that point because we want
19 to make sure that we have that conversation, and we
20 have this conversation. And it should not be a
21 question of, you know, putting ourselves in a
22 position that will demolish landmarks or other
23 buildings or efforts to landmark buildings in order
24 to inhibit certain developments. We don't want
25 either of those things to happen. We want the purity

2 of the landmarks process, and the purity of this
3 process to move forward, and that's the goal at
4 least. So I take your point.

5 Okay, let's talk about the impact of
6 these developments on the skyline, and whether or not
7 exceptional design is one of those components
8 demanding the findings that you mentioned that are in
9 the text for this special permit?

10 FRANK RUCHALA: It is. [laughs] There
11 are findings that speak to the building both at the
12 ground floor, how it's massed and how it relates to
13 the overall city skyline.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And how about in the
15 environmental standards that we should be looking
16 for?

17 FRANK RUCHALA: Sure. So again, actually
18 for the first time in Zoning, we have a requirement
19 that a building utilizing these permits or proposing
20 to utilize these permits propose a sustainability
21 plan, and that that be one of the things that the
22 Commission and the Council review, and meet findings
23 about it. The finding as it was approved by the
24 Commission effectively requires that the building
25 meet or exceed best practices in sustainable design

2 practice. That's looked at both through comparable
3 buildings in the city, and in whatever other means
4 are afforded. The other thing I think and one of the
5 things I think it's important to remember to remember
6 is last year we had a requirement as part of an as-
7 of-right proposal. And it was really only focused on
8 energy use. I think one of the things we heard was
9 that there's a broader view of what sustainability
10 should be really focused on. Things like water use,
11 just the kind of overall tendency. And so, the
12 proposal--the proposed sustainability requirement is
13 broader. It's really intended to review the entirety
14 of the building proposal.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. All right.
16 So this is going to be my last question for you all
17 before I turn it over to One Vanderbilt. But it's
18 sort of a transition question because it applies to
19 both. Which is it seems to me that the--the
20 opportunity to do all of the infrastructure
21 improvements that are being proposed as part of One
22 Vanderbilt, were only possible because of the active
23 and willing engagement by the MTA. If the MTA had
24 not been ready to discuss these improvements, if the
25 MTA did not have concepts in mind this would have

2 been a very difficult package of improvements to put
3 together. You need the MTA to do this stuff. So my
4 question for City Planning, and then we'll sort of
5 transition over to Mr. Holliday, and his team, is how
6 important is it for us to understand the MTA's
7 priorities in advance as we think through the
8 Vanderbilt Corridor. And even the rest of East
9 Midtown? The existence of those plans seem to me to
10 be rather critical, but I wanted to get your--your
11 sense as to how you would put that in the context of
12 what we're doing here, and beyond.

13 EDITH HSU-CHIN: I think it's-- Yes, we
14 think it's very important to understand what the
15 needs of the MTA is or are. And we will hear from
16 the MTA later. The MTA you will also hear from them.
17 They have I think gotten much more intensive in terms
18 of their efforts to identify needs. You know,
19 throughout the very vast system, but certainly here
20 at this key juncture in the city. Certainly knowing
21 the improvements in advance will, you know, help all
22 of our planning efforts. And they certainly will
23 facilitate future special permit actions that are
24 requesting for area bonus, or perhaps even in the

2 case of a landmark TDR. So we agree that it's
3 important to understand what the needs are.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Because you can
5 envision a scenario, which, you know, two or three
6 buildings over or whoever it will be--one building.
7 It doesn't matter--will come and they will say, okay,
8 thank you. All you all passed the Vanderbilt
9 Corridor, which allows for an opportunity to buy from
10 a landmark or do infrastructure improvements per the
11 MTA. What are the improvements that the MTA now
12 needs next on its list, and if those are not
13 articulated or known, then that really is not as real
14 an opportunity. Is that fair?

15 EDITH HSU-CHIN: The opportunity is there
16 certainly. You were asking about what the--

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: If you don't know
18 what--if you don't know what the MTA needs--

19 EDITH HSU-CHIN: [interposing] Uh-huh.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --how do you opt for
21 the infrastructure improvement rate on this special
22 permit?

23 EDITH HSU-CHIN: It's important to know
24 that the MTA's needs are, and there's also-- You
25 know, and the universe of possible improvements,

2 doesn't necessarily come from the MTA. It can come
3 from anyone, really, and they can come from the
4 developer. They can come from the city. They can
5 come from the community board, stakeholders. So MTA
6 is I would say very key, probably the key informer of
7 the infrastructure improvements. But again, they can
8 come from--they can come from anyone.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. So Mr.
10 Holliday, I guess I turn that same question to you,
11 and also if you can share with us the process as to
12 how you arrived at the sites or the improvements that
13 you talked about, and what the interaction with MTA
14 looked like.

15 MARC HOLLIDAY: Sure. I'm going to, you
16 know, have Rob Schiffer and the question about how we
17 negotiated and came to those--that set of
18 improvements because he spearheaded that component of
19 it. But again, as it relates to your question, I
20 think that we always looked at it as a set of
21 improvements that wasn't limited just to the MTA
22 improvements. They just at the time had the biggest
23 need, and my understanding is that need for East
24 Midtown could be as big as close to \$500 million for
25 East Midtown. So I think that while you don't know

2 at the moment what will and won't be on that list in
3 a year or two or three, I think it's fair to say now--
4 --and you'll hear from the MTA shortly--how big that
5 list is going into this process. And, you know,
6 knowing that there's only a finite amount of sites
7 within this Vanderbilt Corridor to satisfy those
8 transit improvements for those that opted to develop
9 and not to build that route. So, with respect to,
10 you know, the specific component, you know, Rob will
11 get that.

12 ROB SCHIFFER: Okay. Sure. It took us
13 almost two years of negotiations to come to this
14 conclusion with this specific set of improvements
15 that we're doing. On the on-site improvements, the
16 MTA presented an initial plan for access into both
17 the New York City Transit System and East Side Access
18 through the core of our building. Which had to be
19 reworked given the difficulties of the buildings in
20 its core. And so that's why the connection between
21 East Side Access and the transit system runs along
22 the eastern most edge of the site. For the off-site
23 improvements, the MTA came to us with a significant
24 package, which over the course of I would say the
25 past year or so, we negotiated with them to come to

2 this complete package. Which specifically addresses
3 or the 4, 5, 6 constraints in congestion.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The big picture
5 question that we have here about density for
6 infrastructure as a new component for this sub area
7 is one that I asked City Planning about, and Chair
8 Greenfield pushed a little bit, too. But maybe, Mr.
9 Holliday, you can describe from your own perspective
10 how we should quantify the benefit of the
11 infrastructure here, and why you believe it's worthy
12 of such a density bonus in your specific application?

13 MARC HOLLIDAY: Well, the problem I think
14 we're at a greater density bonus than we're actually
15 receiving. If you recall, I've said, you know, on
16 previous occasions I thought 33 times was more in
17 line with, you know, what would make sense for this
18 kind of, you know, site next to a transit center
19 given the extraordinary amount of transit
20 improvements we're making. But, I think that through
21 the process, 30 times was developed as the maximum
22 attainable, you know, for this. So I can only, you
23 know, think to look at it in two ways. We never
24 looked at the cost of the improvements per se as--as
25 through the negotiations. It was always the scope of

2 improvements. And then we figured out the cost when
3 the scope was settled in deciding what--what was
4 economically feasible and what wasn't. So I just
5 want to dispel any notion that the two-year
6 negotiation Rob was talking about was a negotiation
7 about money. It really was about scope and
8 improvement, and then as I said, we came down to cost
9 and then decided whether or not the project could
10 support that cost and/or what kind of value we needed
11 to do to the project to make it--to make it
12 economically feasible. Making concessions in certain
13 areas in order to be able to afford not only the cost
14 of these improvements, which I said earlier and I'll
15 say again, is unprecedented as we're told, you know,
16 in City Planning. Precedent of granting, you know,
17 bonus density for improvements. But also the new
18 features, which require the work to be done prior to
19 the TCO so it adds not just a dollar risk, but an
20 execution risk. So we had to feel very comfortable
21 in doing this work not on our own property. All
22 these off-site improvements on a timely budget in
23 order to get that TCO. So it was really at the end
24 of the process when we went through, you know, the
25 amount of scope we could afford to do and couldn't

2 afford to do. And what we felt we could take on
3 within our construction time period, and what we
4 couldn't take on because we would be outside of our
5 construction time period. That we I guess finally
6 settled, and resolved on a scope that was acceptable
7 to the parties.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So this is--this is
9 the point that I really want to focus us on for the
10 moment, which is we're in the--in a case-by-case
11 world here with this special permit. And the obvious
12 question that will be posed to the Council and to the
13 Mayor and to everybody else if we were to approve the
14 application for One Vanderbilt is did you get a good
15 deal for the public? It is obvious that the
16 improvements that are proposed are important, needed,
17 and very impressive. The question is are we getting
18 a good deal for the public? So what I'd like for you
19 guys to attempt to answer is how would you answer on
20 our behalf if we were to approve this that we know
21 with confidence that this is a good deal as opposed
22 to any other number of improvements or less density
23 or whatever? How do we feel good that this is the
24 right--the right balance between density and
25 infrastructure?

2 MARC HOLLIDAY: You know I think that's
3 really what Planning and the MTA comes to a
4 conclusion about when the level of improvements are
5 sort of obvious and overwhelmingly in favor of the
6 public, because I think they are in this case. I
7 think the value of the public benefits exceeds the
8 cost. So that, you know, I wouldn't look at \$210
9 million of improvements as \$210 million of value. I
10 think the long-term value to commuters and residents
11 and tourists and business owners in the area are
12 multiples of that. In terms of making every day, you
13 know, an easier commute, a more timely commute, a
14 more pleasant environment and experience that lasts
15 forever essentially. As long as--as long as these
16 improvements last. So I think that, you know, from a
17 public benefits standpoint, I think the Metro is
18 relatively more straightforward and known when you're
19 getting a package of benefits that so vastly exceeds.
20 I think in this case the development benefit being
21 the stud. So I don't know if there's an arithmetic
22 formula for it, but I think that I can tell you
23 having gone through this process now over the period
24 of the last two or two and a half years, it's a
25 rigorous process. And I respect the process, and I

2 think the public is getting a hell of a building, and
3 a hell of a set of improvements. And I think even if
4 you can't--if you don't have the formula, I think
5 people know it's a good deal for the city. It's a
6 good deal for residents.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Dan.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Yeah, go
9 ahead.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: What I'm going to do
11 is I'm going to let Council Member Greenfield ask two
12 questions, and then I think he has to run out to a
13 meeting, and then I'll get back to you, okay?
14 Council Member Greenfield.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Dan, I have
16 to head to the Project Negotiating Team. I'm going
17 to take your proxy with me while you ask the rest of
18 these questions. I just wanted to follow up on a
19 couple of things that were said directly to what
20 Council Member Garodnick was asking. So, you know,
21 back to the Edith with City Planning, right. I mean
22 understanding once again that it was a two and a half
23 year process. It's rigorous, it's complicated, it's
24 difficult. Does that not concern you as it concerns
25 us that--that by not having a clear standard, I think

2 when you were using your slide was significant
3 pedestrian and transit network improvements. But I
4 think we agree SL Green is making significant
5 improvements, but for a future developer it seems a
6 little mushy, shall we say. So does that concern you
7 at all? It certainly concerns us for the future. Is
8 that something that concerns you. And then, hopping
9 back toward what we said before, does that simply
10 incentivize someone to say, Hey, you know what, I'm
11 just going buy air rights, and call it a day?

12 EDITH HSU-CHIN: We think it's very
13 important to maintain flexibility in the special
14 permit, and [off mic] you know, be-- Excuse me. Be
15 improved.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Did you kill the
17 mic?

18 EDITH HSU-CHIN: [off mic] Hello. [on
19 mic] I've killed the mic. Is it working?

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, there you go.

21 EDITH HSU-CHIN: Okay, thank you. Where
22 was I? Okay. So the improvements again we stated
23 earlier must meet very rigorous and demanding
24 findings as established by the special permit. You
25

2 had asked whether--excuse me--you had asked because
3 this process--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Mushy--

5 EDITH HSU-CHIN: [interposing] Mushy

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --is the word
7 that I used.

8 EDITH HSU-CHIN: We don't--as I said, we
9 don't like mushy. We like that it's flexible.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay.

11 EDITH HSU-CHIN: We like that it's
12 flexible. Oh, yes. I think it would be--frankly, I
13 think it would be folly to try to determine in
14 advance every single specific improvement we want on
15 every single site. That we think would be more of--
16 serve as a strait jacket. We want to make sure we
17 retain some flexibility. So we can accommodate the
18 best improvements that the future demands. So I
19 think it's very helpful to have general--plan general
20 guidelines, general understanding of what the future
21 needs are. But to have a very fine grained list of
22 specific improvements tied to specific sites could
23 actually render the process more impractical. And it
24 actually could end up taking more time.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Sure. I mean
3 I want to be fair. There is a range between mushy
4 and rigid, and I think we're asking maybe there's a
5 little more give in that range. I think once again
6 the purpose really speaks to Council Member
7 Garodnick's point, which is we want to ensure that
8 these projects are in the public interest. But also,
9 we want to make it clear for the developers who are
10 looking to develop in the future, right? You know,
11 unfortunately for SL Green they are the--the guinea
12 pigs in this case. And they have to go through a
13 very rigorous process, and hopefully as a result that
14 would make it somewhat easier for the future. I know
15 that in some cases it maybe their competitors, but
16 still, we'd like to just make the--the playing field
17 a little bit easier. So just something to perhaps
18 think about.

19 My other question actually is something
20 that Mr. Holliday mentioned, and I actually was
21 curious about myself. How did you come up with the
22 30 FAR number? I know that around the world and
23 especially parts of Asia, Dubai, Taipei, Shanghai,
24 we've got much taller structures. What was magical
25 about 30 FAR that you said this is where we stop?

2 EDITH HSU-CHIN: There were a lot of--
3 there were a lot of factors that led to the 30 FAR.
4 You may recall that it was actually the number that
5 we had proposed in our 2013 East Midtown Text
6 Amendment that through the special permit, projects
7 around Grand Central Terminal could achieve up to 30
8 FAR. The 30 FAR we believe is a--is a significant
9 enough increase in floor area to incentivize a
10 developer to undergo the Discretionary Review, which
11 we all know is an arduous process. It's a huge
12 commitment of time, energy and resources, financial
13 certainly. And we know that we do have to provide an
14 adequate enough--a sufficient enough incentive to
15 make sure--to ensure that developers will seek it,
16 and that we get the improvements. You know, 30 FAR
17 is--is not--is a number. It's a number, right, but
18 there are projects in the area that are approaching
19 30 FAR. We have, you know, the Chrysler, which is
20 27. The Lincoln Building, which is 27 FAR. Of
21 course, these are older buildings, and they lower
22 floor to ceiling heights. So they may not be as tall
23 as future buildings. There are also other factors.
24 You know, we looked at the existing special permit,
25 which was 21.6 FAR. We looked at a full block site,

2 which is essentially the largest site you can get in
3 Vanderbilt Corridor. And we did some--you know, you
4 frankly can get an infinite amount, an infinite
5 variety of massings at any FAR. It really depends on
6 the program, on the design, on a number factors. But
7 we believe 30 FAR was--was appropriate for the area.
8 And while it is higher than what today's special
9 permit allows in the Grand Central Sub District, the
10 Grand Central District and the East Midtown area it
11 is an area of global distinction. And we should be
12 allowing for great significant new buildings here.
13 So 30 FAR we believe was well within, you know, the
14 ambitious. But at the same time, also, you know,
15 not--not a number that was alien to, you know, this
16 central business district area.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: And I'm not
18 disagreeing with anything you said. I think actually
19 it is a very good description. And actually just
20 coming up from the other side, I'm really just trying
21 to understand how City Planning comes to make this
22 kind of policy, right. So you hit the nail on the
23 head, and I think we agree with you that this
24 particular district is the most important business
25 district in New York City. We want to make sure it

2 continues. We want to make sure it's cutting edge.

3 We want to make sure it's world class. Look at other

4 business districts throughout the world, there are

5 higher FARs. I'm not advocating it. I'm simply

6 wondering in this case about a developer who is

7 willing to go up 10% higher. In other cases, you may

8 have similar situations. How did you decide that 30

9 is the magic number? So, you explained the process,

10 but I'm curious as to why you said you can't go above

11 30 and decided to cut it off at that level.

12 Considering that this is a world class estimation,

13 and in other world class estimations we have seen in

14 recent years taller buildings.

15 MARC HOLLIDAY: I think we thought

16 stopping at double 15, which was the base FAR was a

17 good place to be. It was also the highest FAR

18 allowed in the Zoning Resolution is 33, and that's in

19 yards. We thought this made sense to be a little bit

20 lower than that, too.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Holliday, you

22 have that itch again. You know, you have to add to

23 it.

24 MARC HOLLIDAY: Well, I just wanted to

25 add to it from my--sort of from the business side of

2 things. While I mentioned earlier 33 I thought would
3 be sort of economically optimal. There is a link
4 between 30 and 33, you can differ.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Sure.

6 MARC HOLLIDAY: It's not--it's a very
7 tight band of 10%. But certainly, much beyond 30 you
8 get into a case of dimension returns from a
9 construction perspective. 30 or right about 30 is
10 where it just so happens you start to maximize the
11 yields for a sensible building in terms of good
12 dimensions, reasonable elevator and core structure,
13 floor plates, et cetera. And as you go higher and
14 higher to achieve the same either it becomes very,
15 very costly or you start to end up with very, very
16 small floor plates. And it does become, you know,
17 not optimal, if you would. So, again, there may be
18 some--some latitude around 30, but it's not--it's not
19 a question of I don't think 35 or 40. I mean, there
20 is--

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Sure.

22 MARC HOLLIDAY: --I think just a basic
23 business reason why this number tends to be on a
24 global standard around the number where--where most
25 major New York--those buildings are tapping it.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. And I have
3 one more to add to your test.

4 ROB SCHIFFER: And just to add to Mr.
5 Holliday's comment from the point of view of
6 architectural design, we have designed some wonderful
7 100-story structures in Shanghai, Hong Kong,
8 elsewhere. They only make sense at this higher
9 dimension proportion et cetera when they go straight
10 up. So this taper, which is a very important part of
11 the discussion evolution and design along with these
12 collaborators or bodies from the City, et cetera,
13 would not be possible. It simply diminishes to a
14 floor plate below 12,000 square foot gross above this
15 point, which is almost at that point unusable. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Thank you,
18 Mr. Greenfield. I'm going to call on Mr. Garodnick to
19 continue his line of questioning.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you very
21 much Chairman and Mr. Greenfield. You have my proxy.
22 Use it judiciously. Thank you. I want to go back to
23 the Transit Hall for the moment. This has been the
24 subject of a lot of conversation in the community as
25 to location of Transit Hall size and amenitization.

2 I want to see if you could discuss a bit about what
3 steps SL Green is taking to ensure that it's both
4 accessible and a valued public space? What sorts of
5 programming, you know, one might expect when walking
6 into that room? And then I also want to talk to you
7 about the door. So let's start with the first--the
8 first part?

9 MARC HOLLIDAY: Sure. [coughs] The
10 Transit Hall is located on the northeast corner of
11 the site for a very specific reason and that is that
12 East Side Access riders, which as you saw in the
13 simulation, form the majority of the riders that are--
14 -pedestrians that are flowing underneath One
15 Vanderbilt footprint. Are headed to points south and
16 southwest or to make transit to transit connections.
17 That means that they're trying to get to 42nd Street
18 or they're trying to head down to the 4, 5, 6, S or
19 7-Train. So the Transit Hall was located not at the
20 nexus of where those commuters are looking to head
21 to. Because if the Transit Hall was located there,
22 the mass of people, the crush that you saw over 6,000
23 people per peak hour would make that space not a
24 place of repose. Not a place where people could sit.
25 Not a place where people could wait. It would end up

2 being a transit hallway, a transit corridor, a
3 transit escalator, so to speak. So the Transit Hall
4 was located on the northeast corner away from the
5 direct path of where people are going.

6 So that we could have a place of repose
7 with the train boards could wait and use the space as
8 they do Grand Central's Main Hall. Where during rush
9 hour as you walk through there and you see groups of
10 people, commuters waiting for their track to be
11 posted. Talking to each other. You see tourists
12 enjoying the space, and taking it in, and you see
13 some level of concession, coffee, some food, et
14 cetera. With respect to the specific concessions
15 that may or may not be available, that's something
16 that we're still examining. And we've agreed to work
17 with the community board and the borough president as
18 we finalize the specific use of the Transit Hall in
19 the coming months.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So, I guess there's-

21 -

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: [interposing]
23 Why don't you throw the Council into that mix, too,
24 while you're at.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Exactly. So I was
3 just saying as it goes around the picture again. So
4 the wall is that part of the plan already? Is that a
5 living wall? Is that live plant life there growing
6 on the wall? I'm just curious?

7 ROB SCHIFFER: No, it's one of a number
8 of possibilities. The thought is that a large area
9 devoted to public art could be a bar relief. It
10 could be a painting. It could be green wall. Green
11 is a little bit uncontroversial, shall we say. It's
12 generally loved. So it's a good placeholder. But it
13 should be--we I think all believe that something that
14 has great visual impact, makes people feel good.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Until it gets
16 infested with something, I guess it is non-
17 controversial. All right, Mr. Garodnick, yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay. So one
19 of the arguments for the design of the Transit Hall
20 is its visual transparency. And I know that there
21 were a number of conversations at the borough
22 president level about where to locate the door. Now,
23 I want to--I want to discuss this with you at this
24 hearing because I think it's an important question,
25 and important that we get it right. The way it is

2 currently envisioned on these diagrams, if I--if I
3 understand them correctly, the door is on 43rd Street
4 in these pictures. Is that--is that right?

5 MARC HOLLIDAY: In these pictures
6 correct.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And it was
8 part of the--the conversation with the borough
9 president to move the door onto--onto Vanderbilt, is
10 that right or no?

11 MARC HOLLIDAY: It's two different--two
12 different door is what I think we're talking about.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay. So help
14 me out.

15 MARC HOLLIDAY: So the door that was at
16 issue with the borough president was connectivity
17 between the Transit Hall and our lobby, which I don't
18 know if it's shown there are not Jamie. But it would
19 be on the left side of the screen leading from the
20 Transit Hall into our lobby, and that change was
21 made. So whether it shows or not, it is--there is
22 that direct connection as opposed to having to exit
23 the Transit Hall and then circle back in through the
24 main lobby. The second door I think you're referring
25 to is a point of ingress/egress into the Transit Hall

2 itself. And for that why don't you, Jamie, talk
3 about the current state of where that door is to be
4 located. Because we've--we've had it in different
5 locations, and where do we have it now?

6 JAMIE VON KLEMPERER: Yes, as it had been
7 designed, this was some months ago. As you can see
8 from this image, the major--all of the ingress/egress
9 at grade from the exterior were along 43rd Street.
10 We thought that followed the most advantageous path
11 of commuters and would also leave, as you can see
12 from this imagine, this rather grand, we felt
13 beautifully monumental, if you will, visual
14 connection between the porte-cochere at Grand Central
15 Terminal and the Train Hall. And from the converse
16 view, from the inside, would feature this kind of
17 heroic--if you went even closer--view of these big
18 arched windows, and the decorative architecture of
19 Grand Central Terminal.

20 Then I believe the request was made in
21 discussions with City Planning and others, to
22 incorporate some doors rather in this wall demising
23 between the plaza to be and the Train Hall. That's
24 possible and that's something we're illustrating now
25 I believe we have in the--in the submission [coughs]

2 for approval. Although it's true that I think our--
3 our lingering feeling is that for the sake of the
4 best relationship between the eventual park, the
5 interior space, and the flow of people, it would be
6 better not to have those doors. So--because we're
7 all after the best solution, I thought it was
8 important we got some--

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Okay,
10 well, let's--

11 JAMIE VON KLEMPERER: --public feelings
12 out there. [sic]

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Since we have the
14 benefit of having the advocates for the Vanderbilt
15 Door at the table, let's pose the question to them.
16 Because I'm not certain as I sit here what the right
17 answer to this one is. It seems to me a question of
18 we have the most direct access right off of the plaza
19 versus what is a rather impressive visual and
20 aesthetic outcome. City Planning views the
21 importance of the door to be more significant here.
22 So why don't you just address that.

23 JAMIE VON KLEMPERER: I think I've
24 actually already answered that. The Commission felt
25 that having the access between Vanderbilt Plaza and

2 the Transit Hall right at the same location is
3 actually a good idea. So that was their rationale
4 for requiring the door to be there.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: What difference--
6 what difference does it make if you have the door
7 there versus right there, you know, 10 feet away
8 around the corner? What difference does it make?

9 JAMIE VON KLEMPERER: I think it was that
10 you could it very clearly, that--that's how you know
11 how to get in. That was the Commission's point of
12 view.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Do you think that
14 it's not--it will not be clear as to how to enter if
15 you're standing right, you know, with this--right
16 here with this lady in the--the white dress as to how
17 to get into that room?

18 JAMIE VON KLEMPERER: I'm--I'm trying to
19 describe the Commission's intent, which is that they
20 felt that that was the easiest way to do it.

21 ROB SCHIFFER: I don't want to make this
22 into a debate--to debate because we respect the
23 opinion of those whose--whose opinion governs us.
24 But if we were to back our view up a little bit, and
25 look at the whole east facade along Vanderbilt, just

2 to the left of this view is the major entry to the
3 office building. Part of our thinking was we don't
4 want people to be confused about whether they're
5 entering a Train Hall or an office building to have
6 the office building. To have the office building on
7 one side, the Train Hall on the other could clarify
8 especially when you have dozens or hundreds of people
9 walking across finding their way in the morning or
10 evening.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And you also have
12 with the borough president's proposed improvements
13 that you have adopted, you will be able to access
14 from the lobby into the Transit Hall. So there is a
15 Vanderbilt Avenue Access point to the Transit Hall
16 through that means, too. Is that correct?

17 ROB SCHIFFER: That's correct.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Well, I think
19 we're going to have to talk about this when we go
20 further and think about what to do here. Okay. I'm
21 going to finish up. I don't have endless amounts--I
22 have a number of questions here, and I appreciate
23 your time, but this is--this is your shot at the
24 Council. So I think it's important. One comment
25 about the improvements. With the color coded people,

2 it was clear that in order to from East Side Access
3 to the subway, you have to go up to the Concourse
4 level and then back down to the subway. And I think
5 as part of our ongoing conversations, we should
6 consider ways to make that an easier shot. It's
7 something that I think could be easily remedied in
8 this proposal. So I think we should flag that for
9 future discussion. This is a question about
10 mitigation--identified mitigation for other projects
11 and something which anybody here can answer. But
12 there are a couple of components of this proposal on
13 the transit improvements that were already supposed
14 to be mitigations of other projects, the 7 Line
15 extension and East Side Access. And those were
16 commitments that were made by the City and the MTA
17 that as a result of these projects we will mitigate
18 them by doing these things. They're now being picked
19 up by SL Green in this proposed development. So my
20 question really for City Planning and SL Green can
21 add if they wish, why are we giving density bonuses
22 for improvements that were identified as mitigation
23 for other projects? And why is that okay and why
24 should we not be concerned about that as a precedent?

2 MARC HOLLIDAY: Sure. So let's just to
3 bring it into perspective, we're talking about a very
4 limited subset of improvements here. Two stairs were
5 requirements for Hudson Yards. One stair was the
6 requirement for East Side Access. In the entirety of
7 all of SL Green's proposal, that's the scale of this.
8 Number 2, the improvements that were required as part
9 of the Hudson Yard's 7 Line expansion---extension,
10 the two stairs were required in the future. They
11 were required far into the future at the full build-
12 out of Hudson Yards. So let's talk 20 years just to
13 be conservative in the future. Those would be when
14 that would need to be implemented. Here the proposal
15 brings them into today, and for that alone, we
16 believe that there's improvement being proposed as
17 part of that. We think there's benefit to having a
18 commuter's entire life be actually able to use the
19 stair rather than have the City wait to develop those
20 in 20 years or so. So from those perspectives, the
21 City thinks we are quite safe.

22 On the other end of the One MTA stair,
23 while the MTA had it as a requirement of mitigation
24 for their transit project, there was nothing that
25 said they couldn't utilize another type of project to

2 develop that stair. So that there's no conflict
3 there.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right. Well, we're
5 doing a lot of stuff for the MTA as part of this
6 project. So just add it to the list I suppose,
7 right. So let's talk about the lobby and the
8 requirement for through-block access. Because that
9 is something which is part of the application here,
10 which is waiving the requirement that there be
11 through-block access in the lobby of One Vanderbilt.
12 Can you address why that's necessary here, and why
13 you asked for a waiver?

14 MARC HOLLIDAY: [off mic] Jamie, you take
15 it. [sic]

16 JAMIE VON KLEMPERER: Yeah. Yes, in
17 fact, there are entries to the building on both
18 Vanderbilt and on Madison. So there's a path of
19 travel, but it's really for the sake of security that
20 that takes you directly into the core, the elevator
21 core. And, therefore, with today's use of office
22 buildings, you have to invite the throng of anybody
23 and everybody to come through the building. Now, if
24 one were to say-- And the core, by the way has to
25 exist in the center of the building because that's

2 where the structure holds up this 64-story tower. To
3 skirt around the core to create a public way to go
4 all the way through the building, would get in the
5 way of some necessary spaces such as truck dock,
6 elevators for the trucks to go down. The MTA and
7 subway access stairs and escalators that we need as
8 we--more than anything really for the public good in
9 the building. A certain amount of retail, which the
10 City Planning Guidelines require and suggest to
11 enliven the day and night time. So it is not an
12 alleyway, but it's a wonderful lovely part of town.
13 So with so many elements of use that are good for
14 everybody, competing for space in this only 43,000
15 square foot block--it's a very small block as
16 Manhattan blocks go. Not, 200 by 800 or 200 by 600,
17 but 200 by 200 roughly, there is just no room to
18 drive a public way right through the site.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Holliday, do you
20 want to add something?

21 MARC HOLLIDAY: No, I--I think the size
22 of the site. I mean that's just to condense that.
23 It's a much smaller site than what you find on Sixth
24 and Seventh Avenues where you have the requirements
25 for the through block because it's such a large

2 expanse. 200 by 200 it's already a very, you know,
3 tight block, if you will, and we do have entrances
4 on both sides even though it's not a through block.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The--let's talk
6 about the daylight evaluation score here because this
7 is something that's come up repeatedly from the
8 community board, and I think that City Planning
9 should address it. There's a--there's a divergence
10 here between what the Midtown standards is and what
11 this building achieves. Can you address the
12 differential and what findings City Planning made
13 that--that should draw us to the conclusion that this
14 building is--has a fair and not overwhelming impact
15 on the--the light and air here?

16 FRANK RUCHALA: Sure. So to give a
17 little bit of background, Midtown has special
18 heightened setback regulations. They're very
19 complicated. They're very abstract. No one really
20 understands them.

21 EDITH HSU-CHIN: [off mic] That's okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I was counting on
23 you to understand them.

24 FRANK RUCHALA: I don't either. They
25 were developed to be general, and actually as Jamie

2 was talking about Midtown is generally is long
3 rectangular blocks. The block on Vanderbilt are very
4 different for streets. They're is kind of very
5 unique condition in Midtown, and the rules
6 historically have never really worked for block--for
7 these blocks. In 2013, we proposed a series of
8 changes to those heightened setback controls to
9 actually allow for development to occur on these
10 blocks in a more knowledgeable way. So the proposal--
11 --after that was withdrawn because this was a fully
12 discretionary action, we didn't include any
13 modifications to those regulations. What the general
14 view--what their general intent is to ensure access
15 to light and air from the sidewalk from the
16 pedestrian on the sidewalk. The intent or it's
17 probably the Special Permits findings it includes
18 that the building must effectively meet the spirit of
19 those. And I think the intent of this building--it
20 has tapering--does that. Right, it's kind of the
21 intent of this to actually have a tower that tapers.
22 One of the things--the other thing I would note is a
23 lot of the things that the building is trying to do
24 to actually be in its context are exactly the things
25 that are making its score low. Particularly on its

2 Vanderbilt, on it's 42nd and Madison Street frontage
3 where the street walls are higher, just around in the
4 context. Midtown doesn't contemplate street walls
5 like that again because it's just a generic concept
6 that controls. So here is a building that's actually
7 trying to meet that context by having higher street
8 walls on those frontages, and is getting penalized
9 for doing that, right? So part of the findings, the
10 Commission and the Council, too, has to look at the
11 building, its relation to the context and then
12 determine what of those waivers are appropriate.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you and let's
14 go from there to the last two questions that I have,
15 the Environmental Standards, another subject that has
16 come up over time. You know, I think we are all of
17 the view that the Environmental Standards for this
18 building should be the highest in the city. You all
19 have taken some rather significant steps to ensure
20 that you have a very sustainable building. But if
21 you can give us a sense as to what steps you have
22 taken, where you are. And just give us--give us a
23 flavor as to, you know, where you are in the LEED
24 standard. Why you got where you are or where you

2 couldn't get--or why you couldn't get to other
3 places.

4 MARC HOLLIDAY: You know, if I might
5 suggest, as a subsequent panel, we have our head of
6 sustainability for SL Green coming up with I believe
7 LEED and some other folks who are here--

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Okay.
9 I'll withhold the question then.

10 MARC HOLLIDAY: --to discuss it so

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's inappropriate
12 and I'll get that over with. [sic] Let's talk
13 about the--the design of the base for a moment
14 because in the presentation, you had noted that it
15 was done in a way that would allow for much more
16 appreciation of Grand Central. And, I think that is--
17 --that is an objective fact based on how you have done
18 it. But I guess the--there were questions that were
19 raised at the community board level about the design
20 and how it interacts there. And they, you know,
21 asked you to consider various changes or component
22 parts here that could be addressed. And I wanted to
23 see if you had thought about that at all, and how you
24 landed where you did.

25

2 MARC HOLLIDAY: If you can go to the view
3 from the viaduct. It's true that our strategy and
4 our belief and design is, as we all know, a somewhat
5 subjective set of discussions. But objectively
6 speaking, yes, the view from 42nd and Madison towards
7 Grand Central Terminal is substantially more
8 revealing of the landmark building that I think we're
9 all talking about. There is the terminal itself.
10 Because there is a legal relationship of this
11 harmonious tone that has to be struck between this
12 new proposed building and the terminal in order for
13 it to be successful in the transfer of air rights.
14 So, yes, there is a greater view. Our feelings again
15 is an interpretation of a design team, a design
16 group, and it's collaborators and the client as well.
17 Is that the complementary relationship, not the
18 repetitive--repetition or the mimicking of a kind of
19 classical architecture of the terminal characterized
20 by solid materials, deep squared or rectangular
21 windows and classical ornament. But rather than
22 repeating or even more literally recalling that in a
23 modern building with a modern architectural
24 expression, which you see, I believe say so on the
25 screen, I think a more transparent nature would be

2 appropriate. Now, the changes were made as a result
3 of a workshop process between the Commission, rather,
4 the community group and the client and architects.

5 And that manifested--the changes manifested
6 themselves within the entry to the building, which is
7 just sort of beyond the roadway in the center of the
8 facade facing Vanderbilt. Where a series of delicate
9 screens of bronze detailing have been added to recall
10 some of the decorative motifs that are across the way
11 in the big arched windows of Grand Central Terminal.

12 So, yes, these are subtleties. One sees them,
13 though, at the ground, which is I think where view
14 matters most. It's where pedestrians will experience
15 life. And then as I mentioned earlier in presenting,
16 and this wasn't a result of the change, but maybe
17 enhanced as a result of our discussions with the
18 Community Board that the spandrels of terra cotta
19 will be taken all the way up through the building.
20 So as much as possible where we're detailing, and
21 crafting the base of the building, a genuine good
22 faith effort has been made to try to, you know, make
23 something that's harmonious with the terminal. I
24 think another issues that has to do less with
25 architecture and more with use that the community

2 board felt very strong about how the public spaces
3 would be used inside this building. How public
4 transit users would come through their particular
5 route, and whether as Mr. Schiffer said, whether the
6 space inside would be one of passage way or of rest.
7 And all of those complex discussions I think we've
8 followed the kind of general feeling, and wisdom of
9 those with whom we're collaborating.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Well, thank
11 you very much for that, and that--those are all the
12 questions that I have. So I will defer for the
13 moment to our next panels, but I will note we look
14 forward to our ongoing conversations with the
15 applicant of One Vanderbilt ways to maximize the
16 opportunities for the public--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: [interposing]
18 One second.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --to ensure we have
20 the design straight. And, make sure that we hit the
21 right balance here. So we thank you for your
22 testimony, and City Planning. Obviously this is a--
23 you know, in my view a much more thoughtful approach
24 to starting with our East Midtown Rezoning process.
25 So we thank you for your openness to that, and we've

2 enjoyed working with you. Thank you. One last
3 question as long as you're here. You heard the
4 Stairwell Amendment before. I was just curious--the
5 elevator--the fire safe elevators, is that something
6 you're familiar with, Mr. Holliday or have you dealt
7 with in your occupational field this idea of having
8 elevators that are okay to exit during a fire, God
9 forbid?

10 MARC HOLLIDAY: All right. In our focus
11 the Acadia practice is a worldwide practice that
12 among other things focuses on the super tall
13 building. And it's an idea which is in--it's being
14 developed now around the world. In our experience,
15 rather than implemented it, or it's no in-built
16 structures. And so in the case of this building,
17 we're adding a third stair. In other words, extra
18 security measures post-9/11 that are part of this
19 proposal and part of this plan. Not that the
20 elevator is not a good idea. It's a good idea, but
21 this proposal is not relying on that, obviously.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Will people be
23 advised--God forbid something happens--not to use the
24 elevators or to use the elevators?

2 MARC HOLLIDAY: In this case not to use
3 the elevators?

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. All right,
5 well thank you all very much. We thank you for your
6 patience. So from here we're going to call up the
7 MTA just briefly--if we can keep it as short as
8 possible--to sort of fill in the gaps here. And then
9 we are going to switch to inviting people up in
10 panels against and in favor of the project.
11 Unfortunately, we're going to have to limit people to
12 a two minutes each. So if you're with a number of
13 people together on the same topic, maybe you can
14 coordinate your remarks to make sure you hit all your
15 points. It doesn't mean there won't be questions
16 possibly for you afterwards. So I'd like to call up
17 from the MTA Robert Paley, David Haase, and Federico
18 Cuenca. Close? No, I didn't do that well.

19 FEDERICO CUENCA: [off mic] Yes, you
20 did.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh, I did. Okay.
22 All right. You grimaced right there.

23 [pause]

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Do you have a formal
25 presentation you're going to make?

2 FEDERICO CUENCA: [off mic]

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. All right, if
4 I could ask you to please limit that as much as
5 possible because it's been a long day for everybody
6 so far, and I appreciate everyone's patience. As
7 Council Member Garodnick mentioned, this is an
8 important issue for all New Yorkers. It's been a
9 long time and there are some questions we just need
10 to have addressed and we wanted to bring up. So we
11 appreciate your patience. But if you can be as brief
12 as possible, and we'll have a couple of questions I'm
13 sure for you as well. Quiet in the room, and make
14 sure the mic is on, and speak loudly.

15 FEDERICO CUENCA: Okay. All right. Good
16 morning. Good afternoon, Federico Cuenca from the
17 MTA, Director of Strategic Initiatives. Over the
18 past 30 years, the MTA has transformed its massive
19 system. We've invested in trains, tracks, power and
20 stations. We've renovated Grand Central making it a
21 wonderful public space, and a well functioning
22 transportation hub. As a result of these successful
23 investments, people have returned to the system. The
24 subway--on the subway ridership has levels that have
25 not been seen since the last 1940s. And for the

1 first time in a generation, the MTA system is
2 expanding. The 7-Train extension will connect to a
3 rapidly developing new neighborhood on the far west
4 side of Manhattan to the rest of the city. The first
5 segment of Second Avenue Subway will ease congestion
6 on the Lexington Avenue line, and at Grand Central.
7 East Side Access will bring Long Island Railroad
8 riders directly to the new terminal at Grand Central,
9 reducing their travel times by up to 40 minutes a
10 day. The Vanderbilt Corridor Rezoning Proposal
11 complements and builds on this massive public
12 investment already underway. It will put density
13 where it belongs, next to some of the best transit in
14 the country. With MTA's investments this area's
15 access to public transit will be even better.

17 The MTA has shared its strategic plan for
18 Grand Central Subway Station. This plan includes a
19 number of discreet improvement projects that would
20 greatly improve the capacity of the station, and the
21 experience for the people who use it. The One
22 Vanderbilt project and the Corridor rezoning advances
23 that plan significantly providing substantial
24 improvements to the Lexington Avenue part of the
25 station. Then, as each block develops, there is an

2 opportunity for similar significant additional
3 investment in the transit network to advance the
4 MTA's plan. In addition, the Vanderbilt Proposal
5 creates and capitalizes on the opportunity that comes
6 from new construction to make connections that would
7 be impossible or too expensive to tackle with
8 existing buildings in place. The connection for East
9 Side Access to 42nd Street and the direct connection
10 to the shuttle passage way up to the street are prime
11 examples of these opportunities. In sum, SL Green
12 has proposed an integrated package of both on-site
13 and off-site improvements that will provide important
14 benefits to the public and MTA riders.

15 Last fall, the MTA put forward a proposal
16 for its next five-year capital program covering years
17 2015 to 19. Ongoing investment in the reliability
18 and the resiliency of our existing infrastructure
19 will make it possible to carry more people as the
20 city grows. This region is engaged in dialogue about
21 the importance of these investments and how we are
22 going to close the funding gap. Private investment
23 in transit infrastructure has an important role to
24 play in meeting this region's needs and in fueling
25 continued economic growth. The MTA welcomes Land Use

2 redevelopment proposals like the Vanderbilt Corridor
3 that include ongoing sources of revenue for transit
4 investment. Now, I'll turn it over to my colleague
5 Robert Paley.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Just
7 make sure everyone states their name when they start
8 their speech.

9 ROBERT PALEY: Yeah, my name is Robert
10 Paley. I'm Director of Transit Oriented Development
11 at MTA, and I'm speaking in support of the proposed
12 Vanderbilt Corridor text and mapping changes as it
13 relates to the disposition of our former headquarters
14 on Madison Avenue. As you know, the MTA has been
15 encouraged to maximize the real estate assets that we
16 own for public benefit the Madison Avenue
17 Headquarters located on half of the block between
18 44th and 45th Streets is one of MTA's most promising
19 sites for disposition. Proceeds from the disposition
20 will be used to support MTA's Capital Program. We
21 initially offered the site prior to the Vanderbilt
22 Corridor Proposal, and issued an addendum to the RFP
23 late last year to reflect the proposed rezoning and
24 the range of opportunities offered by the zoning to
25 increase base FAR about the current as-of-right. The

1 potential to increase zoning corridor [sic] through
2 this district supports MTA's goals to maximize value.
3 At the same time, our redevelopment would improve
4 pedestrian connections. The RFP requires a direct
5 connection be constructed through the new building on
6 Madison Avenue to the Long Island Railroad Concourse
7 being constructed below Vanderbilt Avenue. The RFP
8 also requires that the existing connection from the
9 building to Grand Central be maintained. Responses
10 are being evaluated with the assistance of Cushman &
11 Wakefield, which is also helping to refine and
12 clarify financial and technical aspects of the
13 proposals. In conformance with the proposed zoning,
14 any selected development proposal will be subject to
15 public review as part of the zone ULURP. Our goal is
16 to narrow the field within the next few months. We
17 would like to move quickly as the Madison Avenue
18 buildings other than retail are substantially vacant
19 with MTA's headquarters recent downtown relocation.
20 In sum, this proposal helps MTA maximize public
21 advantage [sic] from the disposition of its former
22 headquarters and we're supportive of the City's
23 initiatives to undertake the zoning change. Thank
24 you.
25

2 DAVID HAASE: Good afternoon. My name is
3 David Haase. I'm Director of Station Planning for
4 the Transit Authority. I want to--SL Green has
5 already described most of the improvements that they
6 would undertake as part of their project. I want to
7 hit three other points. One was the circulation
8 impacts of their improvements. The other was--the
9 second is for addition--additional circulation issues
10 that need remedy in the farther term. And then,
11 finally the circulation impacts of those further
12 improvements. This would answer some of the
13 questions you had, Chairman, earlier this morning.
14 The propose One Vanderbilt project will generate
15 1,800 additional moves during the peak hour in the
16 Grand Central Subway Station. However, this would 3%
17 of the total moves that are projected in 2020 in
18 Grand Central Subway. The improvements that SL Green
19 would do by themselves will add significant capacity
20 improvements. 28% to the Downtown Lexington
21 Platform; 8% to the Uptown Lexington Platform; and
22 19% of more capacity from the Mezzanine up to the
23 street. So this is why New York City Transit is so
24 very interested in the One Vanderbilt Proposal
25 itself. It will add 3% more riders, but add

1 significantly more capacity and will remedy current
2 congestion we have right now. Getting on into the
3 future beyond the improvements that SL Green will
4 build, there is still need for additional work,
5 particularly on the Flushing Platform. New York City
6 Transit has--has been studying Grand Central for
7 years now. Has figured out what we think we know
8 what needs to happen, and how to do it. The
9 improvements are buildable. We just need someone to
10 build them for us given our capital program.

12 Finally, in the long term, 2033
13 projections have--based on worst-case reasonable
14 development scenarios at East Midtown, have up to 30%
15 more riders in Grand Center Subway Station. However,
16 the improvements that we have designed would add up
17 to 45% more capacity at key choke points. And that's
18 really the key here. We need to go beyond remedying
19 our current congestion and get ahead of the game, and
20 that's what we believe we have a plan to do. We just
21 need the money, and the improvements to do that. One
22 final point. Grand Central is at the intersection of
23 two of our busiest lines, the Lexington North/South
24 Line and the Flushing East/West Line. By improving
25 station flow at Grand Central Subway Station, we will

2 improve the reliability and frequency of both the
3 Lexington expresses and the Flushing. Which will in
4 turn benefit far more riders than even those using
5 Grand Central, but on the entire Lex and Flushing
6 Corridors. Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. I'll
8 start with Council Member Garodnick.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you.
10 Can you just review for us some of the key stats
11 about the improvements of--that the MTA will see, or
12 that the riders would see if the--if the improvements
13 from the SL Green One Vanderbilt Proposal were
14 implemented? They had cited one additional train per
15 peak hour. Give us, if you would, from the MTA's
16 perspective. We want to hear it from you all as to
17 what the benefits will be for a commuter through
18 Grand Central. Either as a Metro North or a future
19 East Side Access or just, you know, people like me at
20 4, 5, 6 and subway and shuttle rider. What will we
21 be experiencing from this?

22 DAVID HAASE: In our more detailed
23 presentations, we have plans of the existing
24 Mezzanine, Lexington Mezzanine and Lexington
25 Platforms. And what we've done is we've circled the

2 basic stairways and escalators that are over-
3 congested or at risk of being over-congested. Which
4 results in basically many, many red circles. Right
5 now, the platform stairs on the Lexington Platforms
6 probably over half of them--on the Downtown Platform
7 most of them are operating at LOS D or E during the
8 peak hour. And that's a--by LOS, Level of Service
9 that means that the stairs are severely congested.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I'm sorry, is
11 that on a scale of A to F?

12 DAVID HAASE: Yes, it is.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay.

14 DAVID HAASE: Sorry.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Yep, that's
16 Downtown?

17 DAVID HAASE: That's Downtown Lexington
18 Platform during the morning rush. F is complete
19 failure. E is you're severely backed up. D is where
20 you are moving up the stair in a crowded condition,
21 not at the pace you would normally walk in a non-
22 congested condition. The SOL--the One Vanderbilt
23 improvements by adding three more stairs, and
24 relocating and winding another stair-- I'm sorry,
25 adding two more stairs, and relocating and widening

2 another Lexington Downtown Platform stair, will
3 result in the immediate improvement of Level of
4 Service on these stairs with nobody operating worse
5 that LOS D in the short term. There will be some
6 more growth. But our--our studies have shown that
7 the Lexington Platform stairs both up and downtown,
8 there will be basically one stair operating I think
9 at I think at an LOS E on the Uptown Platform in the
10 evening. And everything else--all other stairs would
11 be at LOS D or better. This is far better than what
12 we have right now.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: The LOS for
14 the Uptown Lexington during the rush is what? You
15 said for the Downtown it would be--

16 DAVID HAASE: The Uptown Platform during
17 the morning rush is--is operating okay. It's during
18 the evening rush basically when Wall Street comes
19 back Uptown to go to Westchester and Queens that
20 there's the greatest impact on the Uptown Platform.
21 And we are currently--the One Vanderbilt will add one
22 more stair to the Uptown Platform at the far north
23 end. And the--I think only one stair of the
24 operating LOS are very, very low, LOS E.

2 ROBERT PALEY: So there's a vast
3 improvement in the platforms. Plus what SL Green
4 mentioned, which is really, really important. Which
5 is the reconfiguration of all the stairs to create
6 more area at platform level to allow people to get
7 to--better distribute themselves and get on a little
8 faster.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Do you agree
10 with the assessment that it will allow one more train
11 to come through per hour at peak time.

12 ROBERT PALEY: That came from us. Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay. So--and
14 during the non-peak times it would just be--it would
15 just be standard. It's really relevant that at the
16 peak--at the peak hours because that's where you're
17 at your capacity.

18 ROBERT PALEY: That's the greatest
19 concentration.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay, when
21 you--when you noted in your testimony that
22 improvements that you had designed would result in
23 45% more capacity at key choke points. That's
24 improvements that are separate and apart from what
25 we're talking about here today?

2 DAVID HAASE: That was if--all of that
3 includes the current work that includes the current
4 work that the Transit Authority is doing. The will
5 include the One Vanderbilt improvements, the
6 concourse [sic]. That would include the One
7 Vanderbilt improvements and that will improve--
8 include all the improvements that we have identified.
9 And this would be the long--the longer term.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I see so all
11 the improvements you've identified that are not yet
12 funded--

13 DAVID HAASE: [interposing] Right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: --and you
15 don't have a plan for.

16 DAVID HAASE: But I do want to stress the
17 One Vanderbilt improvements cover all of the
18 functional improvements we have figured out for the
19 Lexington Platforms and almost everything for the
20 Mezzanine up the street.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: That's good.
22 So this will be my last question, which is can we
23 count on the MTA to help us think through your
24 particular needs so that we can consider ways to
25 synchronize rezoning proposals both current and

2 future to be able to accommodate the--the significant
3 needs that we have?

4 DAVID HAASE: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. So let
8 me just ask just a couple of quick questions, and--
9 So as we move forward, whatever the next project that
10 comes down the pipe, and that's likely to be the MTA
11 Headquarters maybe on Madison Avenue, which I know
12 there's an RFP out. What types of transit
13 improvements do you envision would be the ideal for
14 these projects? Like what's the most important thing
15 that these projects could focus on to further enhance
16 the transportation options?

17 DAVID HAASE: There is some--a little bit
18 more functional improvements we want to do on the
19 Lexington Mezzanine. That was not touched by either
20 our current scope or One Vanderbilt scope. Then the--
21 --the next two big issues are the Flushing platform.
22 There's four ways on Flushing Platform. We have
23 plans to improve all four of those ways off. There
24 is also, if there's still FAR bonus money available,
25 we would be completely restructuring the 42nd Street

2 Shuttle. And it will need work mostly at the Times
3 Square end, but also at the Grand Central end.
4 There's no shortage of work to be done in the Grand
5 Central Subway Station.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: How closely
7 have you worked SL Green on the design or the
8 improvements? I mean do these improvements all come
9 from the MTA or do their designers come up with ideas
10 that you otherwise wouldn't have done?

11 DAVID HAASE: The offsite the stuff
12 inside the subway was stuff that have been
13 coincidentally determining ourselves ahead of East
14 Midtown and Vanderbilt Corridor and One Vanderbilt.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Well, was
16 there--obviously, you were part of that planning and
17 discussion or was MTA not part of that discussion
18 exactly what the improvements would look like in the
19 end?

20 DAVID HAASE: You mean which improvements
21 what they were going to do?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I'm talking
23 about the ones SL Green is paying for as far as the
24 pillars and staircases and those. Those were all--

25

2 did those come from the--from your guys' drawing
3 board or from SL Green's?

4 DAVID HAASE: No, that was all our work.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Just with the--
6 -did they add any stylist changes? Did they add
7 anything like that, or that's just their money, their
8 project?

9 DAVID HAASE: They gave us very nice
10 renderings that we didn't have. In terms of
11 functionality, inside the subway station it was
12 really all coming from us. I can't think of
13 anything. Onsite, of course, was much more
14 collaborative. We had ideas about how to best serve
15 passenger flows, and Grand Central waiting area, and
16 that's--that was probably subject to much more design
17 discussion than the off--than the stuff inside the
18 subway.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay, and if
20 we never got to this point, if we never got to, you
21 know, to where we were after we didn't take up
22 Midtown East last time, and SL Green went ahead with
23 their projects, which they were going to do, and
24 didn't come up with the \$210 million, what would have
25 happened so far as this site?

2 FEDERICO CUENCA: Well, I guess one is if
3 they--if they--I think it would be a shame for this
4 site, not to connect into transit the way it is. And
5 any site that's adjacent to a transit network has an
6 opportunity to contribute to making the circulation
7 better. So I think that would be tremendously poor--
8 a lost opportunity. In terms of the integration into
9 the--of the station and subway improvements, you
10 know, look at our capital program, it's a strained
11 operation. So we're constantly having to juggle
12 those two, you know, what investments to make when.
13 So these are very, very important projects, but we--
14 we think that this kind of private investment where
15 there can be this virtuous cycle of economic activity
16 and investment into the transit infrastructure is a
17 great model to do in places like East Midtown and
18 other important transportation locations.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay. And if
20 they didn't come up, I mean if they built as-of-
21 right, a different type of building a little
22 different maybe, would MTA have come up with money to
23 make certain improvements if not all these
24 improvements.

2 FEDERICO CUENCA: So I guess as the model
3 for last--the last capital program we put in the
4 money for the--the Ken Cole stairs, about \$25 million
5 out of our Capital Program. So I don't want to say
6 that we never do these projects. We did include them
7 into our Capital Program, but we are looking at--we
8 were knowing that this was on the horizon. So it's
9 very difficult for us to say yes, we would absolutely
10 do that project. These are system improvement
11 projects. The majority of our Capital Program is
12 spent on state of good repair, renewal of our
13 existing assets. That's most important for us.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. All right.
15 Any other questions? Well, thank you very much, and
16 we appreciate your patience as well. Now, we're
17 going to move on, as I mentioned, to panels in favor-
18 -in opposition first, and then in favor of the
19 project of people. We are going to have to limit
20 people to a clock of two minutes, Sergeant-at-Arms.
21 So what I'm going to do is call up a panel in
22 opposition first. We're going to bring people up
23 four people at a time. So, we had to separate some
24 of the opposition. We took the list as we go it. So
25 I'd like to call up the following people. Is Laura

2 Kasiko here? Ellen Imbimbo, John West, and Wally
3 Rubio.

4 [background comments, pause]

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: How many people are
6 here now? So we have three? Three here or four?
7 I'm confused.

8 [background comments]

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: There are three.
10 All right.

11 [pause]

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. So, again I
13 apologize that we have a limit of two minutes, but
14 you all look like you've done this before. So
15 whenever you're ready--Yes, a question before you
16 start? Go ahead, shoot.

17 ELLEN IMBIMBO: Hello, my name is Ellen
18 Imbimbo and I am the Vice Chair of the Land Use and
19 Waterfront of Community Board 6, and I am also a
20 member of the Multi-Board Task Force. I'm delivering
21 this testimony on behalf of Terry O'Neal who is the
22 Chair of the Land Use Committee. He says, Most news
23 account many politicians and those in the business
24 world often applaud the public improvements
25 implemented by SL Green for constructing One

2 Vanderbilt. That is an impressive package of
3 improvements. I still believe, however, that there
4 is one important aspect of the project that is
5 missing and that is a publicly accessible lobby.
6 While Borough President Brewer was able to achieve
7 some concession in the area through the addition of
8 an entrance from the Transit Hall to the lobby, much
9 more needs to be done. This building is receiving
10 532,750 square of bonus floor area. This is
11 unprecedented in East Midtown. At the very least at
12 this prominent location, a major transit hub, and
13 open public lobby should be provided. One should do--
14 --one needs more--to do more than walk in, observe and
15 walk out of the developer--walk out if the developer
16 is awarded with a generous public realm improvement
17 bonus of 41% of the building's total floor area. Put
18 another way, the generous public realm improvement
19 bonus is permitting the developer to nearly double
20 the allowable floor area. A member of the public
21 deserves to pass through this state-of-the-art lobby
22 as one moves to and from Grand Center, the subway
23 system and East Side Access. One should be able to
24 pass through as well while moving from Vanderbilt to
25 Madison Avenue. The developer at One Madison--at One

2 Vanderbilt has cited security concerns with open
3 public access. This is understandable. The
4 developer needs to respond to the concerns of
5 prospective tenants. However, with innovative
6 designs and the will to do so, an open access of the
7 lobby is very achievable while maintaining high
8 security for tenants. For example, at World--4 World
9 Trade Center [bell] state-of-the-art tower recently
10 completed in Lower Manhattan, the goal of the--

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] You
12 can finish. Just take--keep reading. Finish it.
13 You got started--I know you started talking and the
14 clock started right away.

15 ELLEN IMBIMBO: Right. Okay, the goal of
16 inviting the public in while remaining--maintaining
17 high security for tenants is gracefully--gracefully
18 achieved. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
19 Were I able to, I would have on my own behalf just
20 added another point. More discussion is needed about
21 the problems we face regarding public circulation
22 above ground. There's been a great deal of
23 discussion about the requirement to widen Madison
24 Avenue. There remains the issue of handling the flow
25 of pedestrian traffic on Madison not to mention the

2 already crowded sidewalks of Lexington Avenue. With
3 added numbers of pedestrians due to East Side Access,
4 One Vanderbilt and other buildings that may be
5 constructed along the corridor is essential to study
6 public space needs in a comprehensive way. Thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Okay.

9 WELLA RUBEN: Push the button. Okay. My
10 name is Wella Ruben. I'm speaking here today for
11 Vikki Barbero who is the Chair of Community Board 5.
12 We want to thank Chair Weprin and the committee for
13 giving us this opportunity. We especially want to
14 thank our Council Member Dan Garodnick for always
15 keeping his door as well as his mind and heart open
16 to us and our concerns. We come here today to re-
17 emphasize our concerns about the Vanderbilt Corridor.
18 We appreciate that on 42nd Street with the right
19 considerations pertaining to daylight and
20 sustainability along with the public improvements at
21 and below grade, a 30 FAR building makes sense.
22 We've seen how the Bank of America works well on 42nd
23 Street adjacent to Bryant Park. However, we cannot
24 see any way that a series of 30 FAR buildings north
25 of One Vanderbilt adjacent to no wide streets, and no

1 vast expansive greenery will be acceptable public
2 policy. Such a conglomeration of towers no matter
3 what the public amenities cannot help but create and
4 deadening canyon effect up Madison that we will
5 regret forever more. The City Planning Commission
6 counters that each of these proposed projects will be
7 required to go through a full public review process.
8 But as we know that the MTA is short half of its
9 public budget to the tune of \$15 billion, and is
10 unable to pay for desperately needed capital
11 projects, we all know that the pressure to use
12 private developers for pay for long overdue
13 improvements will only grow, and ultimately
14 overshadow--pun intended--the public's right to a
15 decent amount of light and air. We have no doubt
16 that given the allowance to ask for a 30 FAR, every
17 developer in the Corridor will ask for the full floor
18 air ratio. And, the pressure to approve these
19 oversized towers will prove overwhelming. The ULURP
20 today is government's only opportunity to decide what
21 is right and in the public interest for the Corridor
22 as a whole. And we are convinced that a string of
23 tall--of these greatest tallest towers is not the
24 [bell] correct answer. Can I--?

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Just finish up
3 quickly, if you can.

4 WELLA RUBEN: It so happens that there is
5 already a scheme put forth by John West and others to
6 create a metric for the amount of FAR that will be
7 allowable. Council Member Garodnick spoke to it
8 before. It's simple and smart. We create a series
9 of four or five questions regarding each site such as
10 the site fronts a wide street or avenue, and whether
11 it is above a transit hub. If the answer is yes to a
12 particular question, a certain added level of density
13 would be allowable. If the answer is yes to all of
14 the questions, as it is at One Vanderbilt, then and
15 only then a grand total of 30 FAR would be committed.
16 We think this metric makes sense and is good public
17 policy, and we ask the Council to seriously consider
18 it. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. You're
20 up. Sir.

21 JOHN WEST: [coughs] I'm John West a
22 member of Community Board 6 and the Multi-Board Task
23 Force. I'm also a member of the City Club. I
24 believe that what I'm about to say is consistent with
25 their concerns. If the City Council is going to

2 approve the proposed zoning for Vanderbilt Corridor
3 and the special permits for One Vanderbilt, it should
4 first make two changes. These changes would modify
5 the expectations that all sites within the Corridor
6 can achieve 30 FAR, and would grant One Vanderbilt
7 only the FAR it has really earned.

8 First, not all of the sites within the
9 Vanderbilt Corridor are equal. Some are better
10 positioned to accommodate greater density than
11 others. Of the five blocks, the one to be occupied
12 by One Vanderbilt enjoys the most density-justifying
13 characteristics. It faces on two wide streets. It
14 overlooks the Airpark above Ground Central. It is
15 adjacent to and able to connect to subway station,
16 and will connect to a subway station, and it is
17 adjacent to and will connect to the pedestrian
18 circulation system of Terminal City. The proposed
19 zoning should be modified to make explicit that sites
20 that enjoy fewer of these density-justifying
21 characteristics should be limited to proportionately
22 less maximum FAR.

23 Second, One Vanderbilt should only be
24 granted bonus floor area from density ameliorating
25 amenities that truly improve the public realm. Not

2 for investments that are little or no real benefit to
3 the community, or which should rightly be provided by
4 others. In the interest of time, I'm going to skip
5 the next four examples and go to the conclusion which
6 is a detailed analysis is attached. It's just been
7 handed in. By this calculus, One Vanderbilt would
8 earn approximately 5 FAR less. This would either
9 leave the building a bit smaller at 24 FAR or require
10 it to provide improvements [bell] to the public
11 realm. Either alternative would be in the public's
12 interest. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you for the
14 time, and I'd like to call on the open door, big
15 heart and sharp mind Dan Garodnick.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you for
17 that. Mr. West, you heard the testimony from City
18 Planning in response to my questions about the site
19 criteria. That there really is no distinction in
20 their view between adjacency to a subway entrance and
21 adjacency to a Grand Central proper because you can
22 get where you need to go through Grand Central
23 proper. What is your response to that.

24 JOHN WEST: I think it's useful to make
25 a distinction between the Terminal City Pedestrian

2 Circulation System, which serves Grand Central and
3 the subway stations in the area, the subway stations
4 all along 42nd Street. Buildings that are close to
5 those subway stations have a more intimate
6 relationship with them than the buildings a couple
7 of blocks to the north that have to get there through
8 the Terminal City Circulation System. I think it's a
9 distinction worth making.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And Ms.
11 Imbimbo, thank you for your testimony, and I'm going
12 to stick with the formalities here. But I hope you
13 will bring back to--to the Chair--the Land Use Chair,
14 Chair O'Neal the testimony of One Vanderbilt and the
15 subject of the limitations in the lobby. You know, I
16 share his interests in seeing the maximum freedom for
17 the public to be able to enjoy the lobby. I also do
18 recognize that there are obvious constraints about a
19 building that needs to be built. It needs to have a
20 core. It needs to have security measures to get
21 people in and out safely. So I welcome the further
22 conversation with you guys on that subject if there
23 are further thoughts. But I thought that that was--
24 that was relevant. And on the big picture, I agree
25 with you about the metrics. I think that we should

2 see how to work that into this proposal either as the
3 findings that need to be me, or explicitly as, you
4 know, you get FAR for these following things. So
5 we're going to continue that conversation as we go
6 forward. So thank you and thank you all, by the way,
7 for being great guides to me throughout this whole
8 process both in the last time around, and also to
9 this one to the Multi-Board Task Force and to Boards
10 5 and 6. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, thank you very
12 much. Okay, we're now going to call up our panel in
13 support of this project. Jay Black, Peter Skealla,
14 Russell, is it Unger, and Colin Wright. Are all four
15 of those people here. I'm sure there is Carolyn.

16 [background comments]

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Is Caroline Harris
18 here? Come up. Why don't you come up also for this
19 panel. I know I'm going to stop that. Okay.

20 [background comments]

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh, no, there's
22 three of you only here, ma'am? Okay, good. So we'll
23 switch Caroline Harris into the fourth seat then.
24 But you guys, I don't know how coordinated you are,

25

2 but okay. Everyone's good. Okay, we need an extra
3 chair then.

4 TOM WRIGHT: You said Colin Wright. I'm
5 Tom Wright.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I did say Colin
7 Wright.

8 TOM WRIGHT: So it's not Tom Wright?

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, wait what is
10 it?

11 TOM WRIGHT: [off mic] From the New York
12 League--

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: From the New York
14 League of Conservation Voters. No. Okay. Sorry.
15 Okay. Have a seat. The gentleman, why don't you go
16 first since I called you first, and then the same.
17 The same two minutes if you could be limited to it.
18 Thank you.

19 JAY BLACK: Great. Good afternoon. My
20 name is Jay Black. I'm Director of Sustainability
21 for SL Green Realty Corp. Sustainability is a
22 critical tool for our business, and as part of our
23 market leading program between 2010 and 2014, we
24 completed more than \$35 million in energy efficiency
25 projects to save more than \$10 million annually

1 through various measures. While looking ahead to new
2 cutting-edge technologies including co-generation,
3 solar, fuel cells and others. We support our tenant
4 sustainability programs by providing key education
5 about our building initiatives while receiving
6 certifications including the Energy Star label in 24
7 of our buildings. We've also achieved four LEED
8 certifications including three Gold Level
9 designations while positioning three more buildings
10 to achieve this designation in 2015. This success
11 has led to New Week to name SL Green amongst its 2014
12 America's greenest companies. And I'm also proud to
13 announce that the US CPA has just announced that SL
14 Green is a 2015 Energy Star Partner of the Year.

15
16 You can learn more about our program,
17 which is provided today through our Sustainability
18 Report, and our current portfolio wide effort has set
19 a new environment standard for New York City
20 culminating in One Vanderbilt. This is our most
21 ambitious program to date, and we are going to be the
22 first in New York City to pursue LEED's latest and
23 most rigorous version 4. Even though this program is
24 not scheduled to take effect until 2016, we designed
25 the project to achieve a Gold Level designation under

1 a version that is 15 to 20% more stringent than the
2 current. One Vanderbilt will achieve one of the
3 lowest carbon footprints anywhere through Midtown
4 Manhattan's unparalleled density, access to
5 amenities, walkability and mass transit system.
6 Lowly glazing, high efficiency mechanical systems,
7 LED lighting and cogeneration come together to
8 achieve the greatest efficiency while restroom
9 fixture reduce building water consumption by 50%. We
10 will install a 60,000 gallon tank to capture
11 rainwater for reuse by structural steel will have
12 recyclable contents to reduce reliance on raw
13 materials. [coughs] [bell] Our program is focused
14 on environmental on all levels, but we're not going
15 to stop there because One Vanderbilt takes this
16 program one more step to go beyond the best green
17 technology to elevate human sustainability. And to
18 complement our LEED Certification, we're pursuing a
19 new designation that focuses on health, wellbeing and
20 comfort called the Wellness Certification. I'll be
21 ten more seconds.

22
23 As the largest office tower to pursue
24 this new certification in the country, this program
25 address air--pure air, water standards, light

2 quality, fitness and tenant comfort. And we're
3 confident that between both our Wellness
4 Certification and high ranking LEED Certification,
5 this will establish a new precedent for New York.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Thank you.
7 You can go.

8 PETER SHAW: I'm sorry.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You guys can fight
10 it out, yeah.

11 PETER SHAW: Yes. As a--as a
12 continuation of that, I'm Peter Shaw. I'm the Co-
13 Founder of the International WELL Building Institute.
14 And so, as Jay mentioned, the tower is not only
15 pursuing LEED Certification, but WELL Certification
16 as well. We embarked on this journey about seven
17 years ago, and part of the U.S. Green Building
18 Council. So the same administration that offers LEED
19 Certification is now the certifying body for WELL
20 Certification. This focuses on occupant health.
21 Environmental health is one-half of the
22 sustainability equation, but we spend 92% of our time
23 in doors. And we thought it was useful obviously to
24 focus on what buildings were doing to the people
25 inside. So SL Green is thought leader and pioneer.

2 Has--is striving to achieve WELL Certification. The
3 program was rolled out last year, and is receiving
4 remarkable adoption across the country. A WELL
5 Certified space--it's important to note this--is
6 actually audited and measured at the end of the
7 process. So if a WELL Certification seal goes on a
8 building that means the building is actually
9 performing. Not just following protocols, but
10 performing in the areas of purified air, purified
11 water. Lighting that's more conducive to the body's
12 house, nutrition, active design, fitness and so on
13 and so forth. So with the seal on the door, we feel
14 very confident that the building is actually healthy
15 for the people inside, and not just for the
16 environment.

17 [pause]

18 All right. Well, good, are we in the
19 afternoon. Yeah. Good afternoon Chair Weprin and
20 Council Member Garodnick. My name is Russell Unger.
21 I'm the Executive Director of Urban Green Council.
22 We're the New York City affiliate of the U.S. Green
23 Building Council, which developed and maintains the
24 LEED Green Building Rating System. I'm here to
25 testify concerning the differences between LEED's

1 lasted versions, LEED's V4, and it's previous
2 version, LEED 2009. I'm providing this information
3 just as context, and we're especially not taking the
4 position on the permit application before you today.
5 LEED is a continuously evolving standard. It becomes
6 more stringent with each addition. Designing a
7 building under LEED's V4 is much more challenging
8 that designing one under the previous versions of
9 LEED. The energy bar for LEED's V4 for a core and
10 shell building in New York City is 14% higher than
11 the energy bar under the previous version of LEED.
12 And this is because they use different baselines from
13 the Energy Code they compare against. The energy bar
14 for the LEED V4 is the same energy code we now have
15 acquired in New York City as of this year. An office
16 building that beats today's code by 14% would be
17 about 30% more energy efficient than one built last
18 year to meet code. Given the significant difference
19 in the energy baseline, a Gold LEED's V4 building
20 would probably achieve platinum under the previous
21 versions of LEED, LEED 2009. Developers still have
22 the option of using this previous older version of
23 LEED, and any developer that opts for LEED V4, is
24 voluntarily choosing a higher bar for themselves. No
25

2 office building is going to build in New York City to
3 LEED's V4. The first to do so, hopefully makes
4 LEED's V4 the new standard for office buildings in
5 New York. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Now, I'll
7 call Ms. Harris--I apologize for keeping you waiting--
8 --from the Roosevelt Hotel, right? Okay. Pass the
9 mic over so we can-- Okay. All right. Ms. Harris.

10 CAROLINE HARRIS: Good morning, Chairman
11 Weprin, Councilman Garodnick and the staff of the
12 committee. Thank you so much for having me scoot
13 into this panel. I'm Caroline Harris of Goldman
14 Harris, LLC. I represent the Roosevelt Hotel at
15 1,015-room full-service unionized hotel located at 45
16 East 45th Street. The hotel supports the Grand
17 Central Public Realm Improvements and Landmark
18 Transfer Special permits that allow an FAR 30
19 especially if at the outset all of the site in the
20 Corridor would be able to meet the criteria to grant
21 it, and that they are fairly applied. However, it is
22 against the requirement that any development
23 containing a transient hotel be allowed only by
24 special permit. We appreciate that the City Planning
25 Commission eliminated the requirement of a Special

1 Permit for the enlargement of an existing hotel, but
2 the Commission did not go far enough. It should have
3 eliminated the Special Permit requirement altogether
4 for the Vanderbilt Corridor. There's no evidence or
5 land use rationale to support the need for a hotel
6 special permit in the Corridor. With respect to the
7 2013 Midtown Zoning Proposal, stakeholders raised
8 concerns regarding the appropriateness of limited
9 service hotels in that broad district. But that
10 testimony is not relevant to the Vanderbilt Corridor.
11 There is no evidence in the City Planning's Report
12 nor the FAIS that the Vanderbilt Corridor is a target
13 for newly developed hotels limited or full service.
14 As a practical matter, however, the Roosevelt Hotel
15 is the only existing hotel site in the city that
16 would need a special permit to continue its 91-year-
17 old business in a brand new perhaps larger building.
18 This is like negative spot zoning. It is not part of
19 a comprehensive plan relating to hotels, as required
20 by the general city law or the Supreme Court. It is
21 unfair to the Roosevelt Hotel. The fact that some
22 desire such a special permit throughout Midtown or
23 throughout the city does not constitute a
24 comprehensive plan or level the playing field for the
25

2 host of the Roosevelt Hotel. To avoid this legal
3 problem all legislation regarding hotels in Midtown
4 should be deferred and addressed comprehensively, or
5 only full-service hotels should be allowed in the
6 Vanderbilt Corridor on an as-of-right basis.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

8 CAROLINE HARRIS: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. We
10 weren't sure how to squeeze you in as for or against.
11 So that's--

12 CAROLINE HARRIS: [interposing] I'm for
13 but--

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: --yeah, whatever.
15 So, that's why we had a little confusion. Mr.
16 Garodnick, we'll start with you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you very
18 much and I'm going to start with Mr. Unger who taught
19 me just about everything I ever knew about
20 environmental sustainability in New York City. The
21 question for you is one, if the One Vanderbilt
22 building had decided to operate under the 2009 LEED
23 Rules, am I to understand you to say that it would
24 have been a LEED Platinum Building?

25

2 RUSSELL UNGER: There's no guarantees,
3 but given that LEED, the new version of LEED is that
4 much more challenging, it's pretty likely.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And is there,
6 knowing what you know about the building, and I won't
7 put you on the spot here because that was not your
8 testimony, but I'm going to put you on the spot a
9 little bit. Do you think that there are more things
10 that One Vanderbilt could have done here to have
11 achieved a Gold--I'm sorry--a Platinum standard under
12 LEED Version 4, and if so, what are--what do you
13 think that might have been or could be? We're still
14 obviously considering this.

15 RUSSELL UNGER: I mean there's--any
16 building can do whatever it wants. It's a question
17 of how much it costs and what you're going to get for
18 it. And they made a--they made an assessment based
19 on what they can invest in the building, and what
20 they get returned environmentally and what the market
21 would bear. So it's a--it's too complex--complex a
22 question for me to give you a answer.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay. Well,
24 we're going to pose to SL Green in a second, too.
25 But let me just ask one more question of you about

2 the Vanderbilt Corridor in general. You--you were
3 very meticulous about saying what the differences
4 were between LEED 2009 and LEED Version 4 are, but
5 advise us a little bit. What do you think we should
6 be demanding as a Council when it comes to buildings
7 that are going through a special permit process
8 through rezoning. What is the fair demand that we
9 should be making of developers in this context?
10 Should we--before Version 4 is effective, should we
11 be sticking with 2009? Should we be looking to
12 Version 4? Guide us a little.

13 RUSSELL UNGER: I think that's going to
14 be something that's evolving. On the one hand, you
15 have a developer here using the standard no one else
16 has used at a very high level. Someone comes before
17 you in two years, you're probably going to ask them
18 to raise the bar. And I think when we--ultimately
19 the Council should be asking itself is will this
20 building still be a good performer 50 years from now
21 because the building will still be around just like
22 Grand Central. But it's going to be--it's going to
23 be a bar that keeps moving. This building is--is
24 moving to a moving bar, but I think that what this
25 building you can--the Council considers successful

2 for this building probably wouldn't be enough two or
3 three years down the road when you get another
4 application.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Well, let me
6 go back to SL Green. We had a number of
7 conversations initiated by the community about this
8 One Vanderbilt building getting to LEED Platinum. It
9 is, of course, being proposed that LEED Gold but
10 under Version 4, which as we just heard probably
11 would have had just Platinum under the existing
12 rules. Can you say a little bit, and we have covered
13 this in, you know, in meetings, but I think it's
14 important to discuss at this hearing, what the
15 limitations were to you, if any, about achieving
16 Platinum status under Version 4 for LEED?

17 JAY BLACK: Sure, absolutely. Well, I
18 think first and foremost when looking at a newer
19 version you've got additional points, and
20 reorganization of how credits are looked at. There
21 is greater stringency on the energy side with less
22 points available to support that. But as to the
23 specific criteria just to talk about the feasibility
24 of certain credits, there are certain things that
25 don't apply to our project whether we're in a high

1 pro--high priority site such as Brownfield, or the
2 feasibility of being able to achieve enough--put up
3 enough solar panels to provide the right amount of
4 renewable energy to meet the criteria. Or to put a
5 large enough cogeneration system in the building to
6 increase your overall energy efficiency. And that
7 also is what Russell was alluding to with the balance
8 of the environmental component with the economics
9 that make sense for the project itself. So, and
10 actually let me just highlight a little bit further
11 we need to break down the LEED system. The LEED
12 Version 4 is comprised of a total of about 110 points.
13 When we had looked at what the feasible points
14 available for the project are and what we could
15 achieve, currently we're at 79 points. Which is--say
16 it's below the Platinum threshold. We're doing
17 everything to cross into the Platinum threshold.
18 However, recognizing that this is a subjective type
19 of system. We always like to recommend a buffer to
20 guarantee a--the pursuit of a certification or
21 certain level. So if you're at 80 minimum for a
22 Platinum, you want to try to choose five to ten
23 percent above that. So going to 84 or 88 points to
24 qualify for it. And when you look about what--look
25

2 at the points that are available, that is actually
3 going to be a big challenge to achieve.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: So, you're at
5 79. There's a total of 110. You get to Platinum at
6 what level?

7 JAY BLACK: 80--80 is the Platinum.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: 80. So you're
9 at 79?

10 JAY BLACK: 79. Well, we're still
11 wrapping up some of the design components, and once
12 you cross to 80 even if you hit that minimum of 80,
13 it's not guaranteed. We've had other projects where
14 we've pursued a Gold level designation. We've gone
15 in with 64 points. We've been awarded 60 to just
16 meet the threshold. So that's why we like to promote
17 that buffer to guarantee yourself the or give
18 yourself greater assurity of achieving the level of
19 certification.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Are some of
21 the components here or some of the points that could
22 be added things that could only be achieved if
23 subtenants of the building decided that they are
24 willing to opt into. Is that--is that a part of
25 this?

2 JAY BLACK: Yeah, definitely there is--
3 there is a part to play for tenants and looking for
4 their participation on the energy efficiency side of
5 things. And that plays a very large role within the
6 LEED Certification Program. And as I was mentioning
7 earlier, there's other aspects like utilizing
8 technology such as cogeneration to further enhance
9 efficiency. Right now we are utilizing a
10 cogeneration system for the program, upwards of a 2
11 megawatts system. In order to gain access to the
12 additional points, we would need to further enhance
13 our total point amounts. We would need--we've talked
14 about potential sizes of four to five megawatt
15 systems, but that becomes very infeasible from an
16 economic and also a spatial standpoint.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay. So the
18 bottom line here is you all are still going after
19 points on the scale, but you presently feel
20 comfortable with saying that you know you have 79,
21 but you're--you're looking to go further?

22 JAY BLACK: Yeah, we've always taking the
23 position that we want to push the project as far as
24 we can. We would love--you know, and always setting
25 a goal to try to achieve Platinum. However, based on

2 where we are today, and what we think is feasible for
3 the project, that's why we've come out and feel that
4 a Gold level certification is achievable.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And I guess
6 the question about feasibility, though, is really the
7 key one because as Mr. Unger had noted a minute ago,
8 feasibility could mean cost feasibility. Feasibility
9 could mean, you know, as came up in one of our
10 meetings having to put solar panels on the front of
11 the whole facade of the building. When you say
12 feasibility, what--you're talking about feasibility
13 beyond cost I think.

14 JAY BLACK: Correct.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Tell us what
16 you mean.

17 JAY BLACK: Well, there are also--you
18 have to recognize that the LEED system is addressing
19 a broad diversity of buildings both within the urban
20 setting as well as suburban, And certain projects
21 have the ability to access certain points that others
22 may not. For example, the high priority site, and
23 being a Brownfield or special development site. That
24 is something that we are not able to attain. So
25 those are points that out of the 110 that we cannot

2 achieve. So, you're automatically starting off with
3 less points available to your project.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I got it.
5 Well, what are the next 10 points that you think
6 might be available to you then?

7 JAY BLACK: The next 10 points?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Yeah, I mean
9 you said you were at 79, and you're going after more
10 points. So you have something in mind that is
11 potentially feasible, but not necessarily feasible?

12 JAY BLACK: Well, I think that--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: [interposing]
14 What do you have in mind?

15 JAY BLACK: Really, it could be looking
16 at the energy efficiency and water efficiency levels
17 as the project continues to be developed and
18 designed. And understanding how it interacts with
19 the potential exterior irrigation within--within the
20 site for roof setbacks and things of that nature. We
21 may or may not be able to achieve those points, but
22 we'll gain greater clarity as the project develops.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: All right.
24 Well, we certainly encourage you to do that, and we

25

2 thank you for your commitment, which is--which is
3 clear. So thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Mr.
5 Greenfield, any questions about this? No. Okay.
6 Are you preparing to ask questions? I couldn't tell.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I actually do
8 have a follow-up question on the hotel permit that
9 you--

10 CAROLINE HARRIS: [interposing] Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --that you
12 mentioned. My--have you looked at the possibility of
13 keeping the permits overall, but excluding your
14 particular property?

15 CAROLINE HARRIS: We would be--my client
16 would be thrilled.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay.

18 CAROLINE HARRIS: Excluded--excluded from
19 the Special Permit Requirement.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah.

21 CAROLINE HARRIS: There are only five
22 sites in the Corridor. One is being developed, a
23 very beautiful building without a hotel by SL Green.
24 The FEIS says that there are only two potential
25 development sites, the Roosevelt Hotel and the MTA's.

2 So it would be fine to exclude the MTA's--I'm sorry--
3 the Roosevelt Hotel's site from the requirement of
4 the Special Permit for redevelopment or development
5 of the hotel provided we stay in the--in the rezoning
6 as it is otherwise provided.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay, and the
8 point is that could be done at this time, and then we
9 could take up the issue later as we're looking at the
10 entire broader area.

11 CAROLINE HARRIS: Yes, I think it would
12 be more appropriate to address the Special Permit
13 Requirement as part of a--a broader, as I said,
14 comprehensive plan relating to Midtown. The
15 Roosevelt Hotel otherwise would be the only hotel
16 that--that is burdened with that requirement.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. Thank
18 you all.

19 CAROLINE HARRIS: Thank you. I
20 appreciate that.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right. Well,
22 thank you very much to this panel. We are going to
23 move onto another panel in opposition. I only have
24 two other slips here at the moment. So let me first
25 call up Andrea Goldwyn and Roxanne Warren. Is there

2 anyone else here in opposition who hadn't filled out
3 a sheet?

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: [off mic]

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Or who's name is not
6 called.

7 LEGAL COUNSEL: All right.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right. Ladies,
9 whenever you're ready. Just make sure to say your
10 name when you start your testimony, and make sure the
11 mic is on, please. You can sit next to each other if
12 you want. Or, you've got separate mics. All right.

13 ANDREA GOLDWYN: Okay?

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, no problem.

15 ANDREA GOLDWYN: All right. Good
16 afternoon, Chair Weprin and Chair Greenfield and
17 Council Member Garodnick. I'm Andrea Goldwyn
18 speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks
19 Conservancy. Our Public Policy Committee has met
20 with City Planning Chair Weisbrod and his staff and
21 representatives from SL Green and Midtown Trackage
22 and we thank all for their continued willingness to
23 discuss these issues. To start, we fail to see why
24 the Landmarks Commission is not acting in consort
25 with City Planning to calendar unprotected resources

2 on Vanderbilt Avenue. We've requested designation
3 for 51 East 42nd Street at the site of One Vanderbilt
4 and recognize that it will likely be demolished. But
5 there are still three buildings along the Corridor
6 eligible for listing on the State and National
7 Registers of the Historic Places. These fine masonry
8 buildings were designed by significant architects
9 some as part of Terminal City, which rightly
10 recognize Grand Central as a focal point. Any new
11 plan should consider how they can be supported and
12 reused. Otherwise, we risk losing the special sense
13 of place they create, and their graceful relationship
14 with Grand Central in favor of a wall of anonymous
15 glass towers that could be found anywhere in the
16 world with no connection to New York or to one of the
17 nation's most important landmarks.

18 Regarding One Vanderbilt, in testimony to
19 the LPC, we did not see a harmonious relationship
20 with Grand Central. At the ground floor, the design
21 attempts that relationship exposing a view of the
22 terminal. But with its abundance of angles and
23 sloping corner column, we feel it detracts from its
24 neighbor. The visual connection between the two
25 buildings should be stronger with a simplified base

2 that does not compete. Following our initial
3 meeting, the architecture of this modification, which
4 other groups have suggested, and took substantial
5 time to discuss the building. We appreciate this
6 response, but did not feel these changes rectified
7 our key concerns. Transit improvements, of course,
8 are critically necessary, and you must decide whether
9 these would benefit anyone beyond workers at One
10 Vanderbilt. But as a preservation group, we must
11 analyze the bonus for the effects it could have on
12 landmarks of today and tomorrow. We've been assured
13 that the goals of preservation and transit will not
14 be set against each other, but we're not convinced.
15 Transit bonuses have existed [bell] for many years,
16 mostly for small FAR in tandem with landmark
17 transfer. We hope that the unprecedented increase of
18 up to 15 for transit alone along with the City's
19 inclusive backing in today's presentation does not
20 portend a less viable environment for landmark
21 transfers. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. We
23 appreciate that. Ma'am, whenever you're ready.

24 ROXANNE WARREN: [off mic] My name is
25 Roxanne Warren-- Is the mic on? [on mic] My name

1 is Roxanne Warren. I'm an architect and Chair of the
2 Vision 42 Proposal for 42nd Street, light rail on
3 42nd Street. The City Council should wait on the
4 Vanderbilt Corridor Rezoning Proposal as a precedent
5 for upgrading this entire area around Grand Central.
6 Only then should rezoning occur. This is not an
7 excuse for inaction, but a call to arms for the City
8 Planning Commission to address key problems that
9 affect the long-term viability of the core of the
10 city as a global business center. Focusing on
11 transportation issues, it is clear that adding new
12 office space in a very dense area where sidewalks are
13 already overwhelmed with pedestrians. And where
14 subways are filled to the brim requires more
15 Herculean efforts than those proposed in the current
16 zoning--rezoning plan. What's needed is a
17 comprehensive street use plan for Midtown Manhattan
18 that rationally allocates street space, the City's
19 most valuable real estate among competing users:
20 pedestrians, cyclists, truckers making deliveries,
21 taxi passengers, private motorists and above all
22 better surface transit. Not only buses but light
23 rail trams, which have been so successful in
24 revitalizing cities throughout France where transit
25

2 patronage is not unlike our own in New York City.
3 Let's see. If attention had been paid to the request
4 that was formerly made in December 2009, by the City
5 Midtown Community Boards 4, 5 and 6 for a
6 comprehensive street use plan, the city would already
7 be well on its way to having an acceptable public
8 realm plan for this crowded area. The City Planning
9 Commission has made the case for rushing this
10 rezoning to approval. There are few indications to
11 suggest that East Midtown property owners are facing
12 economic hardships. In fact, these properties are
13 growing in value. Thank you very much for the
14 opportunity to speak. Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Does
16 anyone have any questions? Mr. Greenfield.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you
18 very much. Andrea, so I'm just--I'm reading through
19 your testimony. Is it just in short you guys really
20 don't like this. I mean like--it seems like you hate
21 it, right. I mean you don't like the fact that it's
22 too tall. It's knocking down buildings. You don't
23 like the design. I mean there seems to be very
24 little that you actually like.

2 ROXANNE WARREN: [interposing] You're
3 speaking to her, right?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yes, yes, are
5 you Andrea as well? I'm sorry. [laughter] Are you
6 also Andrea?

7 ROXANNE WARREN: I'm sorry?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Are you also
9 Andrea. I apologize. I didn't-- Yes, yes. I'm
10 sorry. I'm speaking to her. So is there anything
11 you like about the project or is it just no go as far
12 as you're concerned? There's a lot of objections
13 here. I've read through it carefully, and I wanted to
14 note that.

15 ANDREA GOLDWYN: Well, thank you for
16 reading it since I wasn't able to get everything in
17 within the two minutes. I would say that the
18 Conservancy in many instances supports new
19 development. We've supported the development in
20 historic district. We've supported additions to
21 buildings, alterations. We feel there are a lot of
22 issues with this building that we couldn't come to
23 terms with. It is a very tall building about the
24 same height as the Chrysler Building. We're
25 concerned it's overshadowing Grand Central--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]

3 Yep.

4 ANDREA GOLDWYN: --potentially blocking
5 the view of Chrysler.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yep.

7 ANDREA GOLDWYN: We like the building
8 that's there now, which was built specifically in
9 harmony with Grand Central. So when the question
10 came up was there a harmonious relationship of this
11 design with Grand Central, we just didn't see that.
12 The specific design elements that we feel must
13 directly address Grand Central, we didn't see those
14 are harmonious. So those were the concerns that we
15 had.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. I just
17 want to re-up my question specifically, though. Is
18 there anything you like about this proposal?

19 ANDREA GOLDWYN: Is there anything we
20 like about this proposal?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah.

22 ANDREA GOLDWYN: I'd have to go back and
23 talk to our committee about that. I think I've been
24 authorized to say within the statement.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Okay. We'd
3 love to know, and if you wouldn't mind sending me a
4 note--

5 ANDREA GOLDWYN: [interposing] Of course.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --before we
7 vote on this, I would appreciate it.

8 ANDREA GOLDWYN: Of course.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thanks very
10 much.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.
12 Greenfield. Thank you, ladies. I think we're okay.
13 Thank you very much for your testimony. We are now
14 going to move onto the panel in favor, and from here
15 on in. Jim Gutmann, Donna Tucker, Kathleen Culhane,
16 and Markisha Page, Markisha. Is that four? I'm
17 going to ask when I call your name to just give me a
18 here or a nod--or an aqui works also. Yeah, we have
19 all four of them. Total aqui. Okay. So again, the
20 same--the same rules. Two minutes. Please state
21 your name when you start your testimony. Try to
22 speak into the mic and loudly, if you could.

23 JIM GUTMANN: Good morning. I am Jim
24 Gutmann, Vice President at the New York Office of
25 Hines. Hines is a global development and investment

1 management firm, which has developed in excess of 275
2 million square feet globally of all use types. In
3 New York City and the surrounding region, we have
4 been involved in the development of approximately 15
5 million square feet of new space, most of large scale
6 and complex projects including 450 Lexington Avenue
7 and 383 Madison Avenue, the only two major projects
8 developed in and around Grand Central Terminal over
9 the last 25 years. I am speaking today in favor of
10 the proposed Vanderbilt Corridor Rezoning and in
11 favor of the Special Permit for One Vanderbilt, a
12 project that Hines is an active project team member
13 as Development Manager for SL Green. This rezoning
14 and the One Vanderbilt project not only address a
15 fundamental urban planning objective of locating
16 density adjacent to mass transit centers and the
17 supply of new modern office space.

18
19 It will also create thousands of jobs and
20 a source of new business for those in the
21 construction industry for many years to come.

22 Although building construction for One Vanderbilt is
23 not expected to start until the first quarter of next
24 year immediately following the site demolition, SL
25 Green and Hines have already begun to think about a

2 contracting program that offers the opportunity for
3 qualified suppliers and contractors to provide
4 portions of the project's trade work. Through the
5 selection of the general contractor for the project
6 in the coming months, the project will voluntarily
7 implement a subcontracting program that will target
8 15% of the total trade costs to minority or women
9 owned businesses. We will do this by working closely
10 with the general contractors, as we have done on
11 other projects to require subcontractors to stipulate
12 with their bids, the commitments for employing WMBE
13 businesses and holding them contractually accountable
14 for those percentages as the trade work is awarded.
15 New York City has an abundance of experienced and
16 skilled contractors and SL Green and Hines are
17 determined to make the project's contracting program
18 for WMBE businesses a high priority.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] If you
20 could, wrap it up.

21 JIM GUTMANN: Thank you for the
22 opportunity to speak.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Okay,
24 good. Next, please.

2 MARKISHA PAGE: Hi. I am Markisha Page
3 and I'm testify today in support of SL Green and One
4 Vanderbilt and the opportunities that it will help
5 for the tradesmen and tradesmen of New York. I'm an
6 insulator and a graduate of Non-Traditional
7 Employment for Women. I've been an insulator for
8 Local 12 Heat and Frost Insulators since 2010 and I'm
9 a journey level mechanic--tradeswoman mechanic. I
10 can definitely vouch for my program in that it helps
11 a lot of women who are searching for opportunities to
12 get into the trades. It was founded in 1978 and
13 prepares women in carills--careers in skilled
14 construction, utility and maintenance trades, helping
15 women achieve economic independence. SL Green is
16 committed to advancing our mission of expanding the
17 opportunity for women in the construction trades.
18 The One Vanderbilt project will provide opportunities
19 for women from across New York City. SL Green is a
20 longstanding partner of NEW [sic] and in promoting
21 tradesmen and their projects across the city. NEW is
22 excited to continue our partnership by putting more
23 women to work in highly skilled union jobs at One
24 Vanderbilt.

2 SL Green's investment in new transit
3 infrastructure with One Vanderbilt will provide
4 additional opportunities for NEW Women. These
5 opportunities will assure economic security for these
6 women and their families. NEW provides the women of
7 New York City with free training and access to high
8 paying careers in the skilled trades. With NEW's
9 training, graduates have access to careers with
10 starting wages averaging \$17 per hour, benefits, and
11 a path to higher wage employment. NEW conducts
12 recruitment in low-income neighborhood, increasing
13 access to skilled trades careers and target
14 employment of local residents on construction
15 projects. NEW graduates are working as construction
16 workers in the building trades and utilities
17 industries. And thanks to a unique partnership
18 between NEW, the building and construction trades,
19 contractors and owners in New York City. Since 2005,
20 NEW has placed more than a thousand graduates in the
21 building and construction trades unions and another
22 thousand graduates in other industry-related careers.
23 Thank you on behalf of NEW. This will help open up
24 more opportunities.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Next,
3 please.

4 KATHLEEN CULHANE: Hi. I'm Kathleen
5 Culhane, President of NEW, Non-Traditional Employment
6 for Women, and I--

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Into
8 the mic.

9 KATHLEEN CULHANE: And NEW is testifying
10 today in support of SL Green and One Vanderbilt, and
11 again the opportunities that this provides for the
12 tradeswomen and tradesmen of New York City. For
13 NEW's program, in particular as Markisha stated,
14 we've placed over a thousand women in the trades in
15 the past 10 years. And there are limited
16 opportunities for low-income and minority women to
17 obtain secure jobs that provide a living way in
18 essential benefits in New York City. NEW students,
19 particularly minority women, often face the greatest
20 challenges in our city. And opportunities like this
21 one provide essential secure futures for tradeswomen
22 and their families. After participating in our
23 programs, as Markisha stated, improvements in wages
24 and standard of living is dramatic. The average wage
25 for a NEW permanent job placement is \$17 an hour, and

2 these wages go up to around \$40 per hour after their
3 four to five-year apprenticeship program. And the
4 opportunities for direct entry that our program
5 provides allow the women of New York City to provide
6 that secure future for themselves and their family.
7 In the work we do, we work with many New York City's
8 leading development companies. And I can attest that
9 SL Green is committed to advancing our mission to
10 expand opportunities for women in the construction
11 trades. The One Vanderbilt project will provide
12 opportunities for women from across New York City.
13 And SL Green is a longstanding partner of Non-
14 Traditional Employment for Women and promoting
15 tradeswomen on the projects across the city. And we
16 are excited to continue our partnership by putting
17 more women to work in highly skilled unionized jobs
18 and the secure--economic security that this will
19 provide. Through an unprecedented investment for
20 public improvements, SL Green's plans to address
21 Midtown's transportation infrastructure crisis while
22 creating 5,200 construction union jobs, and 190
23 permanent union jobs. Thank you [bell] for the
24 opportunity to testify.

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Ma'am.

1 DONNA TUCKER: Oh, okay. I'm Donna
2
3 Tucker representing the Regional Alliance for Small
4 Contractors. The Regional Alliance is a 501(c)(3)
5 organization incorporated in 1990 to provide services
6 to Minority Women Owned and disadvantaged small
7 businesses. The Regional Alliance was established
8 through a unique public/private cooperative venture
9 among several public agencies and large construction
10 related firms. The Regional Alliance Board of
11 Directors includes many of the region's key public
12 agencies, major construction firms and successful
13 MWBE firms. John Tishman, former CEO of Tishman
14 Realty and Construction Corporation served as
15 Chairman of the Regional Alliance from '95 to '97,
16 and today Jay Badame, Chief Operating Officer of
17 Tishman Construction Corporation of New York, New
18 Jersey and Pennsylvania serves as its current
19 Chairman.

20 This commitment by the Tishman Company
21 has been unwavering during our nearly 25 years in
22 existence as there is a company belief that
23 supporting small minority and women firms that
24 provide services to the construction industry as well
25 as inclusion of minorities and women in the labor

1 forces working on the projects for which they have
2 oversight. Since 1998, the Regional Alliance has
3 provided contract monitoring of compliance service on
4 five major contracts, three of which are in New York
5 City: Jet Blue Airways, \$800 million terminal at JFK,
6 and Delta's Redevelopment Program at JFK, and Delta's
7 La Guardia Airport Connector project. The Regional
8 Alliance exceeded the MWBE and workforce
9 participation goals all of the aforementioned
10 projects. The Regional Alliance in collaboration
11 with Tishman Construction developed an out-of-the-box
12 MWBE labor force and community relations program for
13 the aborted New York Jets, New York Sports and
14 Convention Center. The Regional Alliance has worked
15 closely with SL Green in the past. We worked
16 together to develop a very progressive minority
17 women's business and minority women labor force
18 program for SL Green's Aqueduct Project Proposal. We
19 believe that SL Green will do the same on this
20 project. Thank you for allowing me to testify.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.
23 Any questions for the panel? Seeing non, thank you
24 very much. We appreciate your support, and comments.
25 I would like to now call up John Tritt, Hotel Trades

2 Council, Edison Wallace, [sic] from 32BJ; Manuel
3 Contreras from 32BJ and Carl Johnson from the
4 Building Construction Trades Council. Gentlemen

5 [background comments, pause]

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right. Whenever
7 you guys are ready.

8 JOHN TRITT: [off mic] Good afternoon.
9 Got it. [on mic] Good afternoon. My name is John
10 Tritt. I'm the Political Director of the
11 Hotel Trades Council. Our union represents 32,000
12 hospitality workers in the New York City Metropolitan
13 area, many of whom work in or near East Midtown. I'm
14 pleased to have the opportunity to be here today and
15 to testify in support of SL Green's plan to build at
16 state-of-the-art office tower at One Vanderbilt
17 Avenue. And in support of the Zoning Text Amendment
18 for the Vanderbilt Corridor. Development that is
19 done right, that creates good jobs, that improves the
20 infrastructure of our city and encourages positives
21 business growth are vital to our city's future. By
22 making sure Vanderbilt Corridor anchors a strong 21st
23 Century business district with the right combination
24 of modern office buildings, full-service hotels and
25 transit improvements will lift all boats, so to

2 speak, of providing a healthy commercial district to
3 help drive NYC's economy. The proposed new office
4 tower at One Vanderbilt Avenue is a great beginning
5 to that end. SL Green's commitment to invest \$210
6 million in capital project--capital project and
7 public transit improvements is important for the
8 thousands of New Yorkers and visitors who work and
9 travel through the area everyday including thousands
10 of our members. Importantly, the rezoning includes a
11 Hotel Special Permit, which will ensure that any
12 development in the Corridor will have a positive--any
13 hotel development in the Corridor will have a
14 positive impact on the community. And such special
15 permits should be included in all future rezoning of
16 Midtown East. We feel that the de Blasio
17 Administration has proven responsive to the concerns
18 of the community, the business community and the
19 labor with it's Vanderbilt Corridor proposal. And we
20 thank the developer, SL Green for working alongside
21 labor and the community to ensure that this
22 development creates good jobs and responsible
23 development. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

25 [pause]

2 CARL JOHNSON: Good afternoon. My name
3 is Carl Johnson. I'm the Organizer of Plumber's
4 Local Union No. 1, the Plumbers of New York City.
5 I'm here on behalf--I'm here to speak to behalf of
6 the Building and Construction Trades Council of
7 Greater New York and to express the Council's strong
8 support for the Proposed One Vanderbilt Development
9 Project. Through the unprecedented investment of
10 \$210 million in funding for public capital
11 improvements in the heart of East Midtown and at the
12 doorstep of the Midtown Community Gateway, SL Green
13 plans to address Midtown's transportation
14 infrastructure crisis while creating 5,200
15 construction union jobs and 190 permanent union jobs.
16 In addition to quality jobs, these improvements will
17 create a fast, more efficient commute for residents
18 of every borough, strap hangers from across the
19 region as well as tourists and visitors from around
20 the world.

21 The One Vanderbilt project will reflect
22 the city's vision to create a 21st Century East
23 Midtown with One Vanderbilt poised to anchor the
24 transformation of the outdated Vanderbilt Corridor.
25 The Building and Construction Trades Council of

2 Greater New York and Plumbers Local 1 strongly urges
3 this project, which brings significant public
4 benefits to the community. Thank you for your time.

5 EDISON WALLACE: Community members and
6 Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify in
7 support of One Vanderbilt. My name is Edison
8 Wallace. I am a member of Service Employees
9 International Local Union 32BJ. Today I speak on
10 behalf of the 75,000 members, janitors, doormen,
11 security officers who live and work in New York City.
12 I would like to express my support for the proposed
13 tower development project at One Vanderbilt. SL
14 Green has committed to create a pathway for the
15 middle-class for hundreds of members that work in New
16 York City buildings, providing good jobs with family
17 coverage, retirement security and training benefits.
18 These jobs make it possible for our members and their
19 families to thrive in New York. At its One
20 Vanderbilt Office development, SL Green's continued
21 commitment to creating jobs--quality jobs that will
22 have a real economic impact for all New Yorkers. SL
23 has all--has fully engaged the community and labor
24 unions to ensure community needs and benefits are met
25 by the development project. These benefits go beyond

2 local job creation. They include significant
3 transportation infrastructure improvements that will
4 benefit adjacent areas and improve overall access to
5 New York City. I support this project because it
6 includes a commitment to provide good jobs, fair
7 wages, retirement and health benefits for
8 maintenance, operations, and security workers. I
9 urge you to support the SL Green Development Project.
10 Than you for your time.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Mr.
12 Contreras.

13 MANUEL CONTRERAS: Chairman and Council
14 members. Good afternoon. My name is Manuel
15 Contreras, a New York City Political Organizer for
16 Local SEIU 32BJ. As Edison stated, we represented
17 75,000 janitors, doormen and security officers who
18 live and work in New York City and 150,000 members
19 nationwide. I'm here today to express 32BJ's strong
20 support for the proposed office tower at One
21 Vanderbilt. As part of SL Green's plan to build a
22 state-of-the-art office tower at One Vanderbilt
23 Avenue, they have committed \$210 million to funding
24 public capital improvements in the heart of East
25 Midtown at the doorstep of Midtown community way.

2 This development will not only support the creation
3 of thousands of construction jobs, but it will also
4 create a pathway for the middle-class for hundreds of
5 32BJ members that work in New York City buildings,
6 which will provide good family health coverage,
7 retirement security and training benefits. These are
8 the kinds that make it possible for our members and
9 their families to thrive in New York City. This
10 development will provide funding to improve commutes
11 for subway rider, enhanced connectivity and
12 circulation for East Side Access riders and all users
13 of Grand Central--and all users of Grand Central, but
14 will also create \$50 million in annual tax revenues.
15 The public improvements associated with the plans of
16 One Vanderbilt will have a tangible impact on New
17 Yorkers from every corner of the city, not just those
18 who work or live in the area. SEIU 32BJ strong
19 supports the One Vanderbilt development, and the
20 significant public benefits that it will bring for
21 all New Yorkers. Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Any
23 comments or questions? Mr. Greenfield has a quick
24 questions.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: A quick
3 question, Manuel. How do you get the number 900
4 jobs? Are those jobs going to be created or--

5 MANUEL CONTRERAS: Those are the jobs
6 that will be created with the construction of this
7 project. The actual breakdown in terms of what those
8 jobs be--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: [interposing]
10 Are those permanent jobs or temporary jobs?

11 MANUEL CONTRERAS: They're permanent--
12 permanent jobs.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: 900 permanent
14 32BJ jobs?

15 MANUEL CONTRERAS: That's correct.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: They weren't all
17 32BJ I don't believe, are they? I thought the chart
18 had it broken down to 900.

19 MANUEL CONTRERAS: I haven't seen that
20 chart. I can get you that information, though. The
21 precise numbers.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Send us a
23 note. We'd appreciate it.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: In the SL Green
3 thing they had one slide. I think it added up to 900
4 with all the unions, but I'm not sure. Okay. Thanks.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: That's why I
6 asked.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right. Okay, 900
8 jobs.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: It's okay.
10 Manuel, just send the information you have on that if
11 you don't mind.

12 MANUEL CONTRERAS: Absolutely.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you.

14 MANUEL CONTRERAS: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Speaking of
16 breakdown. Yes, thank you. Thank you all very
17 much. We move onto the next panel. Dick Anderson
18 from the New York Building Congress, Donald Rashte
19 from Building Trades, Carol Willis here from
20 Skyscraper Museum, and Colin Wright, and then what
21 did we do with Colin, now?

22 [background comment]

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, Colin is here?
24 Okay, I'm confused now.

25 [pause]

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yeah, Colin Wright,
3 you were here. We called you before from the New
4 York League of Conservation Voters, right?

5 COLIN WRIGHT: Yeah.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's you. Okay.

7 [pause]

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right, let me
9 add one more. One second. And how about Sami Naim
10 from the Municipal Arts Society. Are you here still?
11 I understand that it's a busy day--he's here--but
12 it's a busy day and people have a lot of places to
13 go. So we will call on everyone who is in favor and
14 make sure that people know they were represented here
15 if they do have to leave. So now here's our panel.
16 Mr. Anderson, do you want to get us started. How are
17 you, sir?

18 RICHARD ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr.
19 Chairman and members of the Council. I'm Richard C.
20 Anderson, President of New York Building Congress.
21 The Building Congress strong supports SL Green's
22 Redevelopment Proposal for One Vanderbilt Avenue.
23 This project will anchor a much needed renewal of the
24 area's building stock, and offer a model for future
25 private investment in public infrastructure. We urge

1 the Council to approve this plan. A study sponsored
2 by the Real East Board last year demonstrated that
3 East Midtown's building stock is inadequate to
4 accommodate the changing needs of many commercial
5 office tenants. With an average building age of 70
6 years, many buildings contain antiquated layouts and
7 building systems unable to meet the needs of modern
8 office tenants. One Vanderbilt changes this
9 paradigm. SL Green will deliver an iconic new design
10 that complements its historic neighbor Grand Central
11 Terminal to the east. Inside, the office spaces will
12 offer the layouts and amenities essential to
13 attracting and retaining technology firms and other
14 sectors that increasingly drive the city's economy.
15 East Midtown is also home to MTA's East Side Access
16 project providing a direct rail link between Long
17 Island and Manhattan's east side, for the first time
18 bringing tens of thousands of new commuters to the
19 neighborhood. One Vanderbilt capitalizes on this
20 multi-billion dollar infrastructure investment
21 building direct access from Grand Central Terminal
22 into the building.

24 Finally, as the Council is aware for the
25 right to build this tower, SL Green will invest more

2 than \$200 million up front to construct improved
3 transit access and create public open space where
4 virtually none exists today. This investment is a
5 model where government can use its zoning power to
6 create value, which private developers will use to
7 implement important public benefits. Finally, the
8 Building Congress further supports the larger
9 Vanderbilt Rezoning, which the Council is also
10 considering. We believe it is contextual while
11 creating important opportunities for future
12 development that will complement One Vanderbilt.
13 [bell] One Vanderbilt is simply not another office
14 building. It is the example of the type of sound
15 planning, and public/private collaboration the city
16 must embrace if it is to remain competitive in the
17 21st Century. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.
19 Anderson.

20 DONALD RANSHTTE: Good afternoon, Chairman
21 Weprin and Council.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Good
23 to see you again.

24 DONALD RANSHTTE: It is nice to see you,
25 sir. [coughs] My name is Donald Ranshte. I am the

2 Senior Vice President at the Building Trades
3 Employer's Association, the BTA is an organization
4 that represents over 2,200 construction managers,
5 general contractors and subcontractors with 80,000
6 workers, union workers, I might add, in New York
7 City. We're here to strongly urge the Council to
8 support this application, and the One--proposed One
9 Vanderbilt project sponsored by developer SL Green.
10 New York City currently has a problem, and that is
11 even with the amount of commercial space that's being
12 built at the World Trade Center and throughout the
13 city, we still compete not only with London but with
14 Singapore and Tokyo and Hong Kong and other emerging
15 cities across the globe for businesses that need
16 state-of-the-art commercial space that can house all
17 of the cutting-edge technology available to them.
18 And New York City needs more of that. SL Green is
19 proposing to do just that at One Vanderbilt. And not
20 only that, but they'll merge into the surrounding
21 area and complement it's area at Grand Central and
22 build using the union labor of 5,000 union
23 construction jobs. And then followed by over 200
24 full-time union employees to manage the building
25 after it's done. \$210 million as you've heard a

2 number of times to--to improvements for Grand Central
3 East Side Access. And speaking not only as a member
4 of the organization, but certainly as somebody who
5 comes into Midtown from the Bronx everyday, the East
6 Side definitely needs that infrastructure upgrade.
7 I urge you to support this, and the BTA will do
8 whatever it is necessary to help make sure that this
9 project is successful. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Did
11 everyone go? Okay. Yeah.

12 COLIN WRIGHT: Good afternoon. My name
13 is Colin Wright with New York League of Conservation
14 of Voters. I'm here testifying on behalf of Ya-Ting
15 Liu, who is the League's Director of New York City's
16 Sustainability Program. I'm here to testify on
17 behalf of NYLCD in support of One Vanderbilt Avenue.
18 This project is a model for the type of sustainable
19 transit-oriented development projects that not only
20 help the city reduce its carbon footprint, but also
21 provide concrete public benefits to New Yorkers.
22 First, SL Green's commitment of \$210 million will
23 improve the commuting experience of straphangers
24 riding the 4, 5, 6 and S Trains. Improving
25 connectivity, circulation and crowding of the city's

2 second busiest subway station. These improvements
3 will help create a new direct connection to the East
4 Side Access Concourse Level from One Vanderbilt sub-
5 grade levels. In addition to East Side Access
6 connectivity, this new sub-grade corridor at One
7 Vanderbilt will enable commuters to effectively
8 access and travel between the S-Shuttle, the 4, 5, 6,
9 7 Lines and Metro North Lines without entering the
10 overcrowded main concourse of Grand Central Terminal.
11 Second, One Vanderbilt will also activate public
12 space surrounding the terminal by creating a new
13 12,000 square foot public plaza on Vanderbilt Avenue
14 adjacent to the Grand Central as well as a 4,000
15 square foot Transit Hall at the base of the tower.

16 The public Transit Hall will have direct
17 sub-grade connection to Grand Central and will serve
18 as an additional train waiting area and gateway to
19 East Side Access. These new public spaces will
20 improve circulation and alleviate crowding in the
21 terminal, and provide new designated places for
22 commuters to congregate. Third, One Vanderbilt has
23 an ambitious sustainability program that shows a deep
24 commitment to green designing. One Vanderbilt
25 provides extensive access to amenities and uses,

2 walkability, and utilization of the broad mass
3 transit system. And it will only--and it will not
4 include parking for tenants, reducing congestion in
5 the area, and also the building's carbon footprint.
6 [bell] In addition, the building includes a 60,000-
7 gallon rainwater collection feature, high efficiency
8 heating and cooling, LED lighting, aggressive
9 recycling measures and many other measures that
10 collectively increase the high watermark for
11 sustainable design. The Public Improvement Plan for
12 One Vanderbilt will create a faster, more efficient
13 commute for residents and visitors at one of the
14 nation's--at one of the country's busiest transit
15 terminals while setting higher standards for what
16 green buildings can achieve in New York City.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Okay,
18 next.

19 SAMI NAIM: Good afternoon. My name is
20 Sami Naim. I am Vice President of Law and Policy at
21 the Municipal Arts Society. I'm here on behalf of
22 MAS to testify in support of the One Vanderbilt--
23 Yeah, this is--there we go--of the One Vanderbilt
24 project and the Vanderbilt Corridor Rezoning.
25 Regarding the One Vanderbilt project, MAS believes

2 that building provides significant to the city and
3 East Midtown area. The building also could serve as
4 a model for future development in the city especially
5 around critical transit hubs. We commend the
6 developer SL Green for its responsiveness to the
7 community's concerns and questions throughout the
8 ULURP process. Our support for One Vanderbilt rests
9 on the following contributions: Significant transit
10 improvements to Grand Central Terminal in
11 anticipation of the increased ridership and East Side
12 Access and the Second Avenue Subway. A pedestrian
13 plaza on Vanderbilt with initial increased funding
14 for maintenance in area that sorely lacks publicly
15 accessible open space. Thousands of square feet of
16 Class A office space ensuring that the area remains
17 competitive with other districts in the region, and a
18 world class architectural design that also addresses
19 sustainability concerns.

20 Having said that, we just have two
21 concerns that we would like to see addresses. First,
22 we still believe that the building should provide
23 publicly accessible space at both the top floor and
24 the second floor terrace that overlooks Grand Central
25 Terminal. Second, we ask that the city take clear

2 steps to provide interagency coordination for both
3 the off-site transit improvements and the pedestrian
4 plaza to ensure that these amenities are delivered to
5 the public without undue burden or delay.

6 Regarding the Vanderbilt Corridor

7 Rezoning, MAS believes that this rezoning makes sense
8 for the city and the East Midtown area as well. We
9 are particularly supportive of the following:
10 Situating high density commercial development
11 adjacent to Grand Central Terminal leveraging private
12 development to help secure massive transit
13 improvements and requiring all major development
14 projects within the Corridor to go through a full
15 public review process. That being said, we have two
16 concerns regarding the rezoning. First, we share the
17 concerns of both the local community board regarding
18 the narrow streets, and also the Landmarks
19 Preservation Commission issue of ensuring
20 coordination between LPC and CPT. Thank you for the
21 opportunity to testify.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.
23 I don't think there are any questions. We thank you,
24 all of you. Don, I hope you are enjoying the new
25 gig, and we wish you all the best. Thank you. Tom

2 Wright from the Regional Plan Association; Joe
3 Rosenberg of the Archdiocese Catholic Community
4 License Council; Moses Silverman, Central Synagogue;
5 and Leo Querta from Lieber House--Labor House. Are
6 all four here? Sorry about that. Okay, one, two,
7 three.

8 LEGAL COUNSEL: [off mic] Do we have
9 four? Did he call your name?

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Who are you here
11 for?

12 PIERINA SANCHEZ: [off mic] Tom Wright.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh, you're here for
14 Tom Wright?

15 PIERINA SANCHEZ: He didn't tell me. He
16 just said come on up.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, come on up.
18 There's--there a point where there's diminishing
19 returns. I just want to warn the advocates. There's
20 starting to get a movement to vote. More and more no
21 votes are appearing all of a sudden in what goes on.
22 But try not to repeat too much after, if you can.
23 Whenever you're ready. Mr. Rosenberg, why don't you
24 get started.

2 JOSEPH ROSENBERG: Good afternoon,
3 Chairman Weprin and members of the City Council's
4 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchise. I'm Joseph
5 Rosenberg, the Director of Catholic Community
6 Relations Council. I'm testifying on behalf of the
7 Trustees of St. Patrick's Cathedral in support of the
8 Proposed Zoning Amendments for the Vanderbilt
9 Corridor, and the Proposed Special Permits for the
10 One Vanderbilt Development. St. Patrick's Cathedral
11 is a spiritual home to millions including the \$2.6
12 million Catholics residing in the Archdiocese of New
13 York. St. Patrick's received Landmark Designation in
14 1966. As one of the oldest structures in East
15 Midtown, St. Patrick's has seen well over a century
16 of change in this neighborhood. Continued
17 revitalization is critical if this community is to
18 prosper. Proposed Vanderbilt Corridor Rezoning would
19 appropriately allow for the increased density near a
20 major transit hub. The potential benefits to transit
21 infrastructure resulting from this proposal are
22 demonstrated by wide array of improvements proposed
23 as part of the One Vanderbilt project.

24 We particularly support the increased
25 opportunities for landmarks to transfer development

1 rights into the city's proposal. Absent the ability
2 to transfer and use development rights, it is very
3 difficult to fund the upkeep of landmark structures
4 as is required under the Landmark Law. This is
5 particularly difficult in the case of landmarks and
6 by religious entities. For example, the current
7 program to fully restore St. Patrick's to ensure its
8 endurance for future generations is estimated to cost
9 in excess of \$175 million. The available zoning
10 tools do not provide any opportunities to transfer
11 the unused development rights from the church. And
12 expansion of transfer opportunities is critical to
13 enable owners of landmark properties to properly
14 maintain their buildings. By allowing the
15 development of up to 30 FAR with the special permit
16 of which up to 15 FAR may be transferred from the
17 landmark, the city's proposal will substantially
18 increase opportunities for landmarks to transfer
19 unused development rights. We urge that the upcoming
20 planning efforts through East Midtown follow the lead
21 of the Vanderbilt Corridor and expand opportunities
22 for the transfer of development from the landmark
23 properties. The Vanderbilt Corridor Rezoning will
24 encourage reinvestment in Midtown and keep New York
25

2 City competitive. The One Vanderbilt Project
3 demonstrates this. We, therefore, support these
4 proposals and urge this committee and the City
5 Council to approve them. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [off mic]

7 PIERINA SANCHEZ: Hi. My Sanchez,
8 Associate Planer at RPA for New York and I'm stepping
9 in for our President Tom Wright. I'm here today to
10 testify in strong support of the Vanderbilt Corridor
11 Rezoning and Application for One Vanderbilt. I'm
12 going to try not to repeat too much, but by almost
13 any measure jobs, office space, salaries, taxes, rent
14 East Midtown has few rivals around the globe. It is
15 one of the greatest generators of prosperity and
16 wealth that humans have ever invented, a 24-hour
17 district with iconic buildings, wonderful public
18 spaces, extraordinary transit access and a
19 concentration of firms that literally shape markets
20 and businesses around the world. But the other
21 building stock in this neighborhood needs regular
22 rebuilding to ensure that we can provide the
23 services, amenities, and technology requirements of
24 rapidly improving industries. With an estimated two
25 million new jobs, destined for the region over the

2 next 25 years by RPA's own calculations, as well as
3 in consultation with MTA New York, Metropolitan
4 Transportation organization. We will also need room
5 to expand in East Midtown as well as in Lower
6 Manhattan, the Far West Side and other office
7 districts throughout the region. Securing and
8 safeguarding the future of this district is our
9 responsibility for future generations who will
10 benefit from the decisions that you all make today.
11 At Regional Plan Association we pay special attention
12 to the infrastructure systems and make the
13 concentration of activity--this activity possible.
14 Including the housing markets that provide our labor-
15 -sorry--our labor force.

16 The movement of goods to support these
17 workers and, of course, the transit system, which is
18 the lift--the life blood of our city. The
19 maintenance and expansion of the system is among our
20 highest priorities. So I won't go into all the
21 reasons why we also agree that \$250 million of
22 improvements is a great deal for the city. And I'll
23 just note, you know, for the record that these
24 investment won't fix all of the circulation problems
25 at Grand Central Terminal especially those involving

2 the No. 7-Train where use and congestion will
3 increase when the 34th Street station opens [bell]
4 and as the Far West Side is developed. However, the
5 most important decision before you today is to
6 approve the zoning application so that One Vanderbilt
7 improvements to our transit system can move forward
8 as quickly as possible. Thank you for your time.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Mr.
10 Silverman.

11 MOSES SILVERMAN: Good afternoon, Chair
12 Weprin and Committee members. Rather than speed
13 read, I'll summarize my remarks of leave a prepared
14 statement. Central Synagogue is the oldest Jewish
15 House of Worship in continuous worship in the State
16 of New York. It's been here since 1870 the Sanctuary
17 on East 55th Street and Lexington Avenue with 2,000
18 households and more than 6,000 individuals in the
19 congregation. We are here to encourage the full
20 support of the Vanderbilt Corridor Rezoning and One
21 Vanderbilt project as the first step in developing
22 the comprehensive new plan for East Midtown. We
23 cherish the landmark status of our Sanctuary, one of
24 the first New York City Landmarks that was
25 designated. That was re-emphasized by the disastrous

2 fire and restoration in August 1988. Our Sanctuary
3 has approximately 150,000 square feet of unused
4 development rights. But current zoning provisions do
5 not provide adequate opportunities for the use and
6 transfer of these development rights. In particular,
7 our Community House is located directly north of our
8 Sanctuary across East 55th Street, but because it
9 sits on merged zoning lot, it's overbuilt by more 20%
10 and it's not an eligible receiving site. We,
11 therefore, welcome the more flexible and enhanced
12 provisions in the original Midtown Rezoning that
13 would have allowed more opportunities for that
14 transfer. We appear today to urge you to adopt the
15 Vanderbilt Corridor Proposal, and then to include a
16 similar innovative transfer mechanism for landmarks
17 in the strategic framework for the revised East
18 Midtown Proposal. We ask that the revised transfer
19 mechanism be flexible allow transfer in a wide
20 receiving area, and permit development at a high
21 density of up to 30 FAR. So after a long day of
22 testimony, as we did at City Planning, we wish the
23 wisdom of Solomon in completing this exercise. Thank
24 you.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Does the
3 Diocese agree with that? Okay.

4 MOSES SILVERMAN: On the record yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

6 MOSES SILVERMAN: Off the record yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Yeah.

8 [laughs]

9 LEO CORRINE: Hello. I'm Leo Corrine
10 [sp?]and I'm here representing our family office as
11 the owners of Liebor House to other landmarks 240
12 Central Park South and 608 Fifth Avenue. I'm here to
13 speak in favor of City Planning's applications
14 regarding the Vanderbilt Corridor. I'm going to skip
15 ahead to the point of this, which is that the mod--
16 I'm sorry--the modification of the existing Grand
17 Central Sub-District Landmark Transfer Permit is an
18 excellent first step in refreshing East Midtown for
19 the 21st Century. Many landmarks will only be able
20 to contribute their unused development rights to the
21 planning goals in the area if this modification is
22 enacted and expanded. Unfortunately, the
23 modifications still requires that the ULURP process
24 limiting its potential benefits. Further, we are
25 concerned that the modifications of the Landmark

2 Transfer Special Permit and the Public Realm
3 Improvement Bonus will compete with each other. This
4 creates a potential conflict if developers are
5 allowed to negotiate the value of landmark
6 development rights against the value of Public Realm
7 Improvements. Such negotiations would divide
8 stakeholders and undermine the potential benefits
9 that this rezoning seeks to create.

10 It would be preferable to create a public
11 realm improvement bonus that developers would be
12 incentivized to use in tandem with Landmarks Transfer
13 Special Permit as opposed to having them in direct
14 competition. And we are committed to ensuring that
15 Lieber House remains an iconic building and an active
16 part of a thriving globally competitive East Midtown.
17 We believe that thoughtful changes like the
18 modification of the existing Grand Central Sub-
19 District Landmark Transfer Special Permit for the
20 Vanderbilt Corridor Proposal can be beneficial to
21 landmarks and the neighborhoods they belong to. We
22 hope that the Vanderbilt Corridor Proposal and any
23 further rezoning in East Midtown consciously support
24 Landmarks' ability to transfer the development rights

2 without creating unintended conflicts with other
3 planning goals. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.
5 Any comments or questions? I'll say no and thank
6 you. We appreciate it. I'm going to call Nick
7 Sifuentes, Gene Russenoff [sp?] . Is he here? I saw
8 him here earlier today. Mitchell Moss, Jen Hensley
9 or Effie. I don't know if they're a tag team or
10 what. I didn't see her, though. I'm going to keep--
11 Who is next? So I think--how many is that here?
12 When I call your name say here or acknowledge that
13 you're here because we lost some people. Is Mike
14 Slattery here?

15 MIKE SLATTERY: Here.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh, there you are,
17 Mike. I didn't see you there. Come on up. Peter.
18 Peter Lempin.

19 PETER LEMPIN: I'm here.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Is Peter here?
21 Good. You guys are getting it now. Bill Higgins.

22 BILL HIGGINS: Here.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right, Bill
24 Higgins. This is it? Is Rashan here as well?
25 Rashan? No? Okay, come on up.

2 [background comments]

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, Gentlemen, you
4 can start this out. Mr. Slattery you're closest to
5 the mic. Go grab it while you can. You can start us
6 off.

7 [background comments]

8 MIKE SLATTERY: Am I on?

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You're very
10 sensitive about that button thing.

11 MAKE SLATTERY: Thank you. We've been a
12 long time--My name is Mike Slattery with the Real
13 Estate Board of New York. We've been long-time
14 advocates for the rezoning of East Midtown and
15 support the proposed Vanderbilt Corridor Text
16 Amendment, and the Special Permit Application for One
17 Vanderbilt. The Department of City Planning has
18 developed a sound proposal along the five-block
19 Vanderbilt Corridor to encourage modern commercial
20 development by allow more flexibility in the transfer
21 of landmark development rights. The proposal to
22 create a mechanism to link new developments in much
23 needed infrastructure and public real improvements in
24 Grand Central is important, and the only realistic
25 source of funding for the foreseeable future. One

2 Vanderbilt is exactly the type of dense transitory
3 development that belongs immediately adjacent to
4 Grand Central Terminal. We think this building will
5 be a model for the type of development to look
6 forward to on Vanderbilt. SL Green's investment of
7 more than \$200 million in transit infrastructure and
8 public development improvements is a significant
9 contribution. We want to stress, however, the
10 significance of this commitment to complete this work
11 as a condition of occupancy is a significant
12 contribution and commitment. Below ground transit
13 work is costly, uncertain and prone to all overruns.
14 This investment will immediately improve pedestrian
15 circulation in and around Grand Central.

16 There is a general agreement that East
17 Midtown's existing zoning is an impediment to
18 necessary modernization of its aging building stock.
19 It is important to note that the 30 FAR proposed by
20 City Planning is the best opportunity to maximized
21 the needed transit improvements while at the same
22 time affording an opportunity to utilize the unused
23 air rights in this district. SL Green's blend of
24 transit improvements and utilization of air rights is
25 a model for future development. This model will make

2 substantial needed public realm improvements and
3 better addresses the longstanding problem of the
4 transferability of development rights for landmarks.
5 The Vanderbilt Blocks also offer unique and
6 unparalleled conditions that justify 30 FAR. Such as
7 the proximity of these blocks to superior transit
8 connections like Grand Central that would offer a
9 direct indoor link at Grand Central Terminal to East
10 Side Access and a network of subway lines. And the
11 four block sites that would also have new development
12 to front on four streets that would improve and
13 enhance pedestrian flow. The higher FARs serve as a
14 catalyst for new development that allows owners to
15 embark on a challenging and unique opportunity to
16 improve urban design, and make an important
17 architectural statement and funding of transit
18 improvements. Lastly, the new development that uses
19 the higher flow of Corridor should along Vanderbilt
20 will go through a special permit process. If there
21 are legitimate and compelling reasons to lower a
22 project's FAR, it should be done at that time. Thank
23 you.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.
25 Slattery.

1 PETER LEMPIN: Good afternoon, Mr.
2
3 Chairman and committee members. My name is Peter
4 Lempin representing the Grand Central Partnership,
5 the Midtown Manhattan Business Improvement District,
6 which is proud to have the subject applications
7 within our district. [coughs] On behalf of our
8 Board of Directors, we welcome the opportunity to
9 comment on the SL Green Vanderbilt project and the
10 City's Vanderbilt Corridor Proposal. [coughs]
11 Today, our community faces a challenge that if not
12 properly and properly address will put the pre-
13 eminence of our area of at risk by allowing it to
14 decline into competitive disadvantage. [coughs]
15 This challenge comes in the form of an aging
16 infrastructure of commercial properties that
17 frequently fail to meet the needs of Class A and high
18 tech firms in the growing 21st Century world economy.
19 While we know the longer term zoning plan for East
20 Midtown neighborhood is currently the subject of
21 ongoing discussions in the steering committee, co-
22 chaired by your colleague Dan Garodnick and Manhattan
23 Borough President, Gale Brewer, of which we are a
24 participant. In our view today's proposals represent
25 an important step forward in addressing this issue,

2 as the proposed actions would allow for the creation
3 of exactly the type of modern, efficient, and
4 sustainable commercial office space that today's
5 corporate tenants demand. For example, the
6 Vanderbilt Corridor Text Amendment would allow for an
7 increase in the floor area ratio to 30, FAR 30--
8 [coughs] excuse me--a sensible, rational and lasting
9 idea, which is sustainable given that the transit
10 improvements now underway and those in making can
11 support this change in density.

12 We believe that by approving the One
13 Vanderbilt Tower, which contributes millions of
14 dollars in public transportation, the improvements
15 that will help to ease commuter congestion in and
16 round Grand Central Terminal. A huge step will be
17 made towards modernizing our aging infrastructure in
18 Midtown East. The project will also create thousands
19 of good paying jobs. These vitally needed
20 improvements will be solely funded by SL Green, and
21 would not be possible without the investment of One
22 Vanderbilt [bell], a significant benefit for tenants,
23 commuters and the city at large. We urge you to
24 approve these proposals, which will help to
25 revolutionize the Vanderbilt Corridor and the

2 adjacent surroundings to preserve the Grand Central
3 area as a world class destination for business, and
4 for those who visit or live nearby. This is exactly
5 the type of development that our city needs to grow
6 and strengthen the local economy thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Next
8 please. Michelle, we're going to bring you up
9 afterward and we'll separate you out. We have
10 Professor Moss here, too. So we'll let you close.
11 [sic] Next.

12 NICK SIFUENTES: Thank you. Good
13 afternoon committee members. I'm Nick Sifuentes,
14 Deputy Director of the Riders Alliance. I'm
15 submitting testimony today the public hearing in--on
16 behalf of four transportation groups, the
17 Straphangers Campaign, the New York City Transit
18 Riders Council, the Tri-State Transportation Campaign
19 and, of course, our organization the Riders Alliance.
20 You have many aspects of the proposal before you to
21 consider: Neighborhood impact, height, density,
22 aesthetic judgments and so on. We can speak to one
23 aspect of that project within our expertise. We
24 believe the transit improvements that the developer
25 SL Green has committed to undertake would make a

2 significant in the lives of hundreds of thousands of
3 daily riders. Currently, the MTA runs fewer rush
4 hour trains than the Lexington Avenue Tunnel can
5 handle. In part because of design flaws on the
6 platform level of the Grand Central 42nd Street
7 Subway Station. Outdated infrastructure also hinders
8 the free flow of riders who are transferring between
9 trains or entering or leaving the station. Without
10 improvements, the flow of pedestrians around Grand
11 Central 42nd Street Station will become worse with
12 East Side Access attracts many thousands of LIRR
13 Riders everyday.

14 The improvements that SL Green proposes
15 to make generated in consultation with the MTA about
16 its top priority needs would take a significant step
17 towards fixing some of the longstanding problems.
18 These include new entrances, rider platforms, longer
19 sight lines for better navigating the packed station,
20 and thousands of square feet to be added to station
21 mezzanines. They are likely to be finished and in a
22 timely way as occupancy of part of the building is
23 contingent on completion of the improvements. They
24 set an important precedent that development in
25 Midtown and elsewhere in the city will rely on

2 improved transit infrastructure and must provide
3 funds for such improvements. To be clear, our groups
4 cannot speak to every aspect that you and community
5 boards are considering regarding the proposal. But
6 we do support what this project would do for the
7 public transit infrastructure. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [off mic] Thank
9 you. The last on this panel, and then we'll do the
10 last panel today.

11 WILLIAM HIGGINS: I need to move this.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

13 WILLIAM HIGGINS: Good afternoon. My
14 name is William Higgins. I'm a partner at Higgins
15 Quasebarth & Partners, and we are the landmarks
16 consultants to SL Green in the One Vanderbilt
17 project, and I'm here to testify briefly I assure you
18 that the project, which will be made possible by the
19 actions before you today will result in a building,
20 which is highly harmonious and compatible with Grand
21 Central Terminal. The building has been very
22 carefully designed by its architects KPF. Which
23 consultancy from the entire time to be at the same
24 time a very building. But one that is highly
25 responsive to Grand Central Terminal, and which

2 enhances many of the characteristics of the terminal.
3 Some of which are less visible now than when they
4 will be when the project is done. Also, the scale of
5 the building Grand Central has always been part of
6 Midtown Manhattan. In the history of Midtown
7 Manhattan there has been a continuous vertical growth
8 and therefore a continuous juxtaposition of buildings
9 of varying heights. Many of the considerable as
10 neighbors of Grand Central Terminal. And this will
11 continue that with a very highly harmonious and well
12 designed building, which we think will be a strong
13 contributor to Midtown and its immediate Grand
14 Central context. We urge you to approve the
15 proposals that are before you today to make that
16 possible. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Thank
18 you, gentlemen. Any questions, Dan? Seeing none,
19 thank you guys. Rashan, we're going to go and
20 Professor Moss if you can come up and take one of the
21 seats. Is there anyone else here who wishes to
22 testify on this item? Yes. Oh, okay. Did you fill
23 out a slip, by any chance?

24 FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic] I did earlier,
25 but it's not here.[sic]

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Come on up.
3 Join the party. Anybody else? All right, so these
4 re the last three to testify today. Rashan, why
5 don't you go first.

6 Sure.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Since you were first
8 at the time.

9 RASHAN TACCACARDI: Sure. Council
10 members, I am Rashan Taccardi [sp?] . I'm a partner
11 at Sharp Architects and a professor at Columbia and
12 also a consultant for SL Green. I know you've had a
13 long day so I just want to make two quick points. One
14 is that the level of amenities that have been agreed
15 to already by SL Green for One Vanderbilt for a 30
16 FAR building far surpass many other projects of that
17 density that have already been improved including One
18 Bryant Park at 28 FAR, One World Trade Center which
19 is a 40 FAR, Hudson Yards and Times Square. And so,
20 I just think it's very important that as people ask
21 for more and more to think about the fact that we
22 already have a lot of precedents on this. The second
23 point I just want to raise. I know you've had some
24 back and forth about whether you want to create in
25 new standards for, you know, a building on streets as

2 opposed to one and so forth. And I just urge--you've
3 done an extraordinary job negotiating these amenities
4 with SL Green. And I'm not sure why Council or City
5 Planning would want to have their hands tied in terms
6 of potentially overly rigid kind of criteria as
7 opposed to your own discretion. Right. Something
8 doesn't have to hit 30 FAR in this corridor. You can
9 say it's 24 or 26 or 28 depending on your own
10 judgment. I'm not sure why you would want to take
11 that judgment away by creating specific standards.
12 because this is a proof in point of how you've been
13 able to negotiate terrific public amenities without
14 having those standards in place. So those are the
15 only two points I wanted to bring up today.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I don't think Dan
17 Garodnick's wife would allow him to have to negotiate
18 each one of these. [laughter] So Professor Moss or
19 whichever. It's up to you.

20 PROFESSOR MOSS: Beauty before age.

21 CAROL WILLIS: Well, I'm Carol Willis,
22 I'm the--

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [interposing] Can
24 you speak into the mic and clearly and loudly.

2 CAROL WILLIS: All right. I'm Carol
3 Willis. I'm the Founding Director of the Skyscraper
4 Museum, and I'm happy to be here again in order to
5 speak in favor of density of Midtown.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: It's great to see
7 you.

8 CAROL WILLIS: Thank you. But I do speak
9 here for--as a historian and for myself rather than
10 for the museum per se. And I'll skip quickly down in
11 the conversation mode to endorse the same idea of the
12 historical precedent that exists for great density
13 with government actions to encourage successful urban
14 zones. So after appraising the monumentality and the
15 excellent designs to contribute to the public real
16 that KPF has done for SL Green, I would note that the
17 proposed increased density on the additional sites on
18 the Vanderbilt Corridor should be viewed in the
19 historical perspective. After 30 FAR achieved by the
20 accrued bonuses, these buildings will equal the
21 ratios of successful skyscrapers of two eras. First
22 of the great Art Deco landmarks such as the Empire
23 State Building and the Chrysler Building of the 1920s
24 that were slightly and smaller than 30 FAR
25 respectively. The 20s towers are tall and

2 distinctive because they were created before the 1960
3 Zoning Law imposed the constraints of FAR. It should
4 be noted in the 1962 law and it's later revisions
5 always envisioned the possibility of bonuses based on
6 the idea of public good. This was the premise of
7 trading air rights for space on the ground. That
8 principle was leveraged by government in Times Square
9 in the guidelines of the 1980s to create 30 FAR
10 skyscrapers on 42nd Street, at 4 Times Square and
11 others that are all logically located just above the
12 transit nexus. These have fueled the success of
13 Times Square's revival as both a modest location and
14 the tourist hub. For these reasons, among others, I
15 urge the City Council to vote yes in favor One
16 Vanderbilt, and [bell] and the Vanderbilt Corridor
17 Proposals. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [off mic] Thank
19 you. Professor Moss, you're last.

20 PROFESSOR MOSS: Mr. Chairman, Councilman
21 Garodnick, I want to say one thing. The two busiest
22 subway stations in New York City are Times Square and
23 Grand Central. Density is not an accident. It's the
24 result of the infrastructure. What's important here
25 is not that Madison--that Vanderbilt Avenue had more

2 density, it's recognizing that Vanderbilt Avenue is
3 linked to more parts of the city where people need to
4 get jobs than any other street in New York. Let me
5 say how we did this. There are 360,000 subway riders
6 who every come through Bryant Park, 51st Street and
7 53rd and Fifth Avenue, 14th Street or Grand Central
8 meaning they're one stop away. If you want New
9 Yorkers to have jobs, they have to be where the
10 subway system, which was built 100 years ago, gets
11 them to. So it's a simple question. This is not
12 just a matter of Manhattan. This is a matter of how
13 people in Queens and Brooklyn can find jobs that are
14 accessible by mass transit. I have in my hands what
15 we used to call captured enemy documents. They're
16 from the MTA website, which as you know, hides
17 everything on that website. And we did a quick
18 analysis of the ridership. It's not just a matter of
19 the Long Island Railroad coming in or Metro North.
20 It's New Yorkers who come to this corridor because
21 that's where the jobs are accessible. We have to
22 improve density here so that the people who want to
23 work can use the mass transit to get to work. That
24 allows us to have low density neighborhood whether
25 its in Westchester or whether it's Gun Hill Road or

2 whether it's in parts of Sheepshead Bay. We can't
3 have low density unless we have high density along
4 the Vanderbilt Corridor. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank your,
6 Professor Moss. Mr. Garodnick. Thank you and I--I
7 agree with that point, by the way, about density on
8 this corridor. This is where it belongs. You want
9 to have your density closet to your main transit, and
10 I think that--that's one of the--the key parts of
11 this proposal, and one of the things that I think is
12 most exciting. I just want to go back to the comment
13 about overly rigid criteria because I think what we
14 are after is some criteria. Not overly rigid
15 criteria. If we have a plan, which allows for a
16 special permit on every site, we have the ability to
17 trade and get infrastructure improvements in exchange
18 for density up to 30. But what we lack is the
19 ability for us to know from one project to the next
20 the criteria, which were applied on the prior sites.
21 And so, I think what you saw me take City Planning
22 through was an effort to try to define the site
23 characteristics that might entitle somebody to go up
24 to 30 FAR in order to give us some parameters or
25 guidelines. But I don't--I wouldn't regard them as

2 overly rigid. I would just regard them as some--some
3 standards for future applicability. So I just wanted
4 to make that point to you. And with that, Mr.
5 Chairman, you have been a gentleman and a scholar.
6 Thank you for all of the time today.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.

8 Garodnick and thank you for your patience. Thank you
9 all for your cooperation today. Anyone else here to
10 testify on this matter. Speak now or forever hold
11 your peace. We are now going to close this public
12 hearing on Land Use 197 through 2001 inclusive, 201--
13 it's a spot like 2001--197 through 201, and we're
14 going to close this hearing, and we'll be talking
15 about and voting at a future date. So thank you all
16 very much. Once again, have a good day.

17 [gavel]

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The meeting is now
19 adjourned.

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date April 23, 2015