



**IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by the New York City Police Department and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, pursuant to Section 197-c of the New York City Charter, for a site selection and acquisition of property located at 241 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street (Block 776, Lot 12) for use as a headquarters for the New York City Police Department's Counterterrorism Unit, Borough of Manhattan, Community District 5.

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This application for site selection and acquisition of property was filed on March 27, 2018 by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). The proposed action would facilitate the siting of a new headquarters for a specialized division of the NYPD's Counterterrorism Bureau, Manhattan Community District 5.

**BACKGROUND**

241 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street is located in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan, within Community District 5, on the north side of West 26th Street between Seventh and Eighth avenues. West 26th Street runs one-way from west to east. Land uses within the surrounding area include multi-family apartment buildings, commercial uses, mixed residential and commercial uses, and public facility and institutional uses. The Chelsea Television Studios and Fashion Institute of Technology are both located within the surrounding area.

The project site is improved with an approximately 33,725-square-foot building built to a floor area ratio (FAR) of 5.4, which houses a public parking garage containing 225 parking spaces. It has six floors, is approximately 100 feet tall, and includes two additional small businesses on its ground floor and second story.

The proposed action would permit the NYPD and DCAS to lease the site to house the headquarters of the NYPD's Bomb Squad, which is a specialized division of NYPD's Counterterrorism Bureau. The primary responsibility and mission of the Bomb Squad is the investigation and mitigation of suspicious packages, articles, devices, and potentially explosive

substances. The Bomb Squad also conducts confidential investigations and disposes of all explosive materials coming into the possession of the NYPD. This disposal takes place at the Rodman's Neck facility in the Bronx. All five boroughs would be serviced from the project site.

The NYPD's Bomb Squad headquarters are currently located at the NYPD's 6th Precinct at 233 West 10th Street. Over time, the amount of staff and required response and safety equipment needed for Bomb Squad operations has significantly increased, exceeding current capacity at that location. In particular, advances in technology have expanded equipment options, which is one of the primary reasons a new, larger facility is needed. According to the NYPD, acquiring the project site would allow the Bomb Squad access to an up-to-date, modern, and new facility that would meet its expanded needs, enhancing overall operations and productivity. Furthermore, this location in Chelsea would enable reasonable response times to areas considered to be sensitive potential targets, such as Midtown and Lower Manhattan.

The proposed project would entail the renovation of the existing structure on the site with no increase in floor area. The renovated building would include storage space, administrative office space with desks, locker rooms, and parking on the ground and second floors. The facility would also include space for robot training and obstacle courses, a dog kennel and dog run, a stress reduction room, and an electronic devices training and storage room. Parking and storage for six specialized NYPD vehicles related to the Bomb Squad's operations, including two Heavy Response Vehicles, two Light Response Vehicles, one armored bomb-disposal vehicle (BearCat), and one X-ray van, would be on the ground floor. An additional nine accessory parking spaces, for nine NYPD departmental-issued SUVs assigned to the Bomb Squad, would be provided on the second floor. These SUVs are considered standard-issue vehicles and would not be specialized for Bomb Squad functions. Thirty-nine uniformed employees would be based on-site over three eight-hour shifts per day. Approximately eight employees would be on site at any given time.

To facilitate the parking component of the proposed site selection and acquisition, the NYPD sought and received a zoning override of the Manhattan Core parking requirements to permit parking in the building.

The Citywide Statement of Needs for Fiscal Years 2016-2017 listed a new headquarters for the NYPD Bomb Squad with the capacity to accommodate approximately 40 staff members at a location suitable to respond to calls for service in Lower Manhattan, with truck access, a kennel, and space for four specialty response vehicles and storage of equipment and supplies. The project site was not specified as a location for this facility, and the Manhattan Community Board 5 District Needs Statement for Fiscal Year 2016 does not make specific reference to the facility.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This application (C 180296 PCM) was reviewed pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the SEQRA regulations set forth in Volume 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations, Section 617.00 et seq. and the City Environmental Quality Review Rules of Procedure of 1991 and Executive Order No. 91 of 1977. The lead agency is NYPD. The designated CEQR number is 18NYP001M.

After a study of the potential environmental impact of the proposed site selection and acquisition, a Negative Declaration was issued on March 23, 2018.

### **UNIFORM LAND USE REVIEW**

This application (C 180296 PCM) was certified as complete by the Department of City Planning on April 23, 2018, and was duly referred to Manhattan Community Board 5 and the Manhattan Borough President in accordance with Title 62 of the Rules of the City of New York, Section 2-02(b). The application was also referred to Manhattan Community Board 4, at that Community Board's request.

### **Community Board Public Hearing**

Manhattan Community Board 5 held a public hearing on this application (C 180296 PCM) on May 10, 2018, and on that date, by a vote of 34 in favor, one opposed, and with one abstention, adopted a resolution recommending denial of the application unless the following conditions were met:

“1. Applicants secure a commitment from DOT to explore and institute an effective means to ensure clear passage of emergency vehicles along 26th Street; and

2. Applicants ensure the issuance of a traffic study examining the detailed impact of their operation on 26th Street, to ensure that solid data is used to preserve the quality of life along the block, as well as to ensure the efficacy of emergency response teams in times of traffic congestion along the block.”

### **Borough President Recommendation**

The Manhattan Borough President issued a recommendation approving the application on June 19, 2018.

### **City Planning Commission Public Hearing**

On June 13, 2018 (Calendar No. 7), the City Planning Commission scheduled June 27, 2018 for a public hearing on this application (C 180296 PCM). The hearing was duly held on June 27, 2018 (Calendar No. 21). One speaker testified in favor of the application and three testified in opposition.

An NYPD spokesperson summarized the proposal and gave a brief overview of the Bomb Squad’s operations. He stated that any employees traveling to the location via personal vehicle would legally park on-street, that disposal of explosive materials would take place at the NYPD’s Rodman’s Neck facility in the Bronx, and that all boroughs would be serviced from the proposed location with rapid response times. The spokesperson also stated that emergency response vehicles would not turn on the audio component of their sirens until they reached Seventh Avenue in order to not adversely affect residences located along the same block. The emergency response vehicles would still need to engage the visual, flashing component of their sirens to signal the need for clear passage.

The remaining speakers represented the condominium board for an adjacent property. The speakers expressed concern about impediments to clear passage on West 26<sup>th</sup> Street for emergency vehicles and the potential for increased congestion in light of proposed Department

of Transportation (DOT) bicycle lanes. The speakers also highlighted concerns about conflicts with residential and school-related community facility uses within the immediate area, the potential for the proposed site to become a target for a terrorist attack, and raised questions about the City's process for vetting landlords with whom DCAS engages.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

## **CONSIDERATION**

The Commission believes that this application (C 180296 PCM) for site selection and acquisition is appropriate.

The proposed action will allow NYPD to lease a 33,725-square-foot public parking garage to renovate and use as a new headquarters for the NYPD Bomb Squad.

The Commission notes that the proposed facility was requested as part of the Citywide Statement of Needs for Fiscal Years 2016-2017, and that the acquisition of the site will allow for the improved function and operational capacity of a unit tasked with a particularly vital role in preserving the safety of New York City. The Bomb Squad currently shares a facility with the NYPD's 6th Precinct at 233 West 10th Street, and, over time and with technological advances, the staff and required equipment utilized for the unit's operations has significantly increased, exceeding the current capacity at that location. Therefore, the Commission recognizes the necessity for the Bomb Squad to be housed in a new headquarters facility that meets its highly specialized programmatic needs, which may continue to evolve with further technological advances. The facility will provide specialized training and obstacle course spaces for robots used in response to suspicious materials, a dog kennel and training space, a stress reduction room, and an electronic devices training and storage room, all of which will enhance and allow for the continued improvement of the Bomb Squad's capacities and response capabilities.

The Commission notes that both the Citywide Statement of Needs and the NYPD's staff emphasized that a new facility would also need to be located so as to provide rapid response times to the most sensitive target areas in the City. These are generally recognized as Lower

Manhattan and Midtown, including Times Square and its surrounding environs. The Commission recognizes that the proposed location allows for rapid access to these areas via Seventh and Eighth avenues, the Joe DiMaggio/West Side Highway, and cross-town access via 23<sup>rd</sup> Street to the FDR Drive. This access is expected to result in improved response times to all parts of the city.

Community Board 5 and some speakers at the public hearing expressed concern that the Bomb Squad's operations could significantly impact traffic congestion, the clear passage and operational efficiency of emergency response vehicles traversing the block—those of the NYPD Bomb Squad, New York City Fire Department (FDNY) or otherwise—and quality of life for nearby residents. The Community Board's recommendation for disapproval with conditions requested that the NYPD and DCAS perform a detailed traffic study and work with DOT to institute means for clear passage along West 26<sup>th</sup> Street. The Commission is in receipt of a letter from the NYPD dated July 6, 2018, which described the anticipated traffic conditions on the block under the proposed action and addressed the conditions outlined in the Community Board's recommendation. NYPD noted that the removal of the existing 225-car parking garage would likely result in fewer vehicles traversing the block, and that several large nearby parking facilities would be able to absorb parking demand. The letter stated that the small staff presence on-site at a given time, half of whom are expected to arrive via public transit, would not serve to increase congestion on the block. This letter also addressed the proposed facility's compatibility with the future DOT bicycle lanes on the south side of 26<sup>th</sup> Street. In addressing Community Board 5's concerns, NYPD noted that DOT does not provide pre-emptive traffic signal overrides to agencies other than FDNY.

In an additional letter dated July 19, 2018, DCAS detailed the vetting process for engagement with private landlords during site selection and acquisition. DCAS also clarified that this acquisition would entail a 20-year lease with both the option for renewal and a preferential purchase right should the opportunity to permanently acquire the site arise.

**RESOLUTION**

**RESOLVED**, that the City Planning Commission finds that the action described herein will have no significant impact on the environment; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, by the City Planning Commission, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 200 of the New York City Charter, that based on the environmental determination and consideration described in this report, the application submitted by NYPD and DCAS for the site selection and acquisition of property located at 241 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street (Block 776, Lot 12), Borough of Manhattan, Community District 5, for use as a new headquarters for the New York City Police Department's Counterterrorism Unit, is approved.

The above resolution (C 180296 PCM), duly adopted by the City Planning Commission on July 25, 2018 (Calendar No. 19), is filed with the Office of the Speaker, City Council, and the Borough President in accordance with the requirements of Section 197-d of the New York City Charter.

**MARISA LAGO**, *Chair*

**KENNETH J. KNUCKLES, ESQ.**, *Vice Chairman*

**ALLEN P. CAPPELLI, ALFRED C. CERULLO, III, MICHELLE DE LA UZ,**

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**HOPE KNIGHT, ANNA HAYES LEVIN, ORLANDO MARÍN, LARISA ORTIZ,**  
*Commissioners*

# MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FIVE

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Vikki Barbero, Chair

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Wally Rubin, District Manager

May 11, 2018

Hon. Marisa Lago  
Chair of the City Planning Commission  
22 Reade Street  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: Application by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to acquire a building at 241 West 26th Street (between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues) for use as the new headquarters of the NYPD Bomb Squad**

Dear Chair Lago:

At the regularly scheduled monthly Community Board Five meeting on Thursday, May 10, 2018, the following resolution passed with a vote of 34 in favor; 1 opposed; 1 abstaining:

WHEREAS, The NYPD and DCAS ("Applicants") seek to acquire and site select a privately-owned property located at 241 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street, in order to relocate the NYPD's Counterterrorism Bureau's Bomb Squad headquarters from its current location at 233 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street; and

WHEREAS, The primary responsibility and mission of the Bomb Squad is the investigation and mitigation of suspicious devices, articles or packages with the potential for explosive capabilities, as well as explosive hazard sweeps and standby response services for high profile public events; and

WHEREAS, The property in question is a six-story, vehicle parking garage with retail use presently on the ground and second floors, which will be converted into a new headquarters for the Bomb Squad with no structural additions or enlargements to the existing building, and will not result in any change to the existing building's footprint or envelope; and

WHEREAS, The Bomb Squad disposes explosive material in the Bronx and not at the proposed facility; and

WHEREAS, The proposed headquarters will include storage space, administrative space, locker rooms, and parking for six (6) emergency response vehicles stocked with specialized technical equipment; and

WHEREAS, The need for these vehicles to be parked and stored in a climate-controlled environment is a primary reason for the selection of this site; and



WHEREAS, The other primary reason for the selection of this site is to allow for reasonable response times to lower Manhattan and midtown Manhattan, the areas of highest concern for security and counter-terrorism measures; and

WHEREAS, The application requires no zoning changes or text amendments, but as a capital acquisition, is required to go through the ULURP process, ensuring public review; and

WHEREAS, The total number of officers in the Bomb Squad is 39, with no more than eight personnel at a time occupying the headquarters for normal shifts; and

WHEREAS, The 10th Precinct will have procedural jurisdiction over the Bomb Squad, and

WHEREAS, Though there is an acute concern about the impact of officers' parking vehicles along the block, Applicants state that the number of dedicated parking spaces on the street as part of the application is zero, as the 15 spaces inside the facility would accommodate all six of the squad's trucks, as well as the vehicles for the eight personnel expected to be on-site during a given shift; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, Applicants state that the cessation of the commercial parking garage operation presently at the site will further result in the removal of a considerable amount of vehicular traffic from the block, a net decrease in impact; and

WHEREAS, Applicants have been in communication with DOT about the forthcoming installation of a crosstown bike lane on 26<sup>th</sup> Street, and there is no present concern about any conflict between it and the proposed facility, especially as there will be a net reduction, as stated above, of 200 vehicles coming and going from the parking garage now in operation; and

WHEREAS, In response to considerable community concern about the use of sirens on the block, Applicants reiterated their commitment as a matter of policy never to utilize sirens until off of the block and onto an adjacent avenue, and are in discussions to look into ways to trigger red lights at adjacent intersections in times of an emergency response, to ensure a clear path for emergency vehicles in order to quickly facilitate their passage from the block to an adjacent avenue; and

WHEREAS, Despite Applicants' coordinating with DOT thus far, there remains concern from the public about the considerable congestion already on this block, and a keen interest in obtaining more information from DOT in the form of a traffic study examining the specific concerns of congestion at peak times on 26<sup>th</sup> Street; and

WHEREAS, Community Board Five agrees with the importance of a more informative traffic study, not only to more accurately address concerns about congestion on the block in terms of quality of life, but also in terms of the efficacy of the operations of the Bomb Squad itself in times of emergency response; and

WHEREAS, Throughout its history on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, there has only been one complaint lodged against the Bomb Squad's operation, which was a noise complaint about HVAC equipment on the exterior of the building that was then remediated successfully; and

WHEREAS, The Applicant will install an HVAC unit with proper acoustic protection; and

WHEREAS, Anticipating continued interest in the details of the proposed operation, as well as concern about how its introduction to the neighborhood is carried out, Applicants are committing

to returning to Community Board Five at any time for a debrief on the state of the operation, allowing for members of the public to air any concerns moving forward; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, Community Board Five recommends denial of the application by the New York City Police Department and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services to acquire a building at 241 West 26th Street (between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues), for use as the new headquarters of the NYPD Bomb Squad, **unless** Applicants secure a commitment from DOT to explore and institute an effective means to ensure clear passage of emergency vehicles along 26<sup>th</sup> Street; **and** Applicants ensure the issuance of a traffic study examining the detailed impact of their operation on 26<sup>th</sup> Street, to ensure that solid data is used to preserve the quality of life along the block, as well as to ensure the efficacy of emergency response teams in times of traffic congestion along the block.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,



Vikki Barbero  
Chair

Charles Jordan  
Chair, Land Use, Housing & Zoning Committee



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**Gale A. Brewer, Borough President**

June 18, 2018

**Recommendation on  
ULURP Application No. C 180296 PCM – NYPD Bomb Squad Headquarters  
by The New York City Police Department and the New York City Department of Citywide  
Administrative Services**

**PROPOSED ACTION**

The New York City Police Department (“NYPD”) and the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (“DCAS”) together (the “applicants”) seek to site select and acquire a privately-owned property located at 241 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street (Block 776, Lot 12) in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan Community District 5. The property is currently a six-story vehicle parking structure with a retail use on the ground floor and the second floor. The applicants are seeking this site selection and acquisition in order to relocate the NYPD Bomb Squad Headquarters from its current location at 233 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street (Manhattan Block 620, Lot 33). The new Headquarters facility would include storage space, administrative space, locker rooms, and vehicle parking.

The New York City Charter mandates that the “acquisition by the city of real property (other than the acquisition of office space for office use or a building for office use), including acquisition by purchase, condemnation, exchange or lease be subject to the Uniform Land Use Procedure. While no specific findings must be met to make a property eligible for acquisition pursuant to Section 197-c, site selection and acquisition of a city facility must be analyzed pursuant to the New York City Charter’s “Criteria for the Location of City Facilities” as adopted by the City Planning Commission.

The 1989 City Charter required the City Planning Commission to “adopt criteria to further the fair distribution of the burdens and benefits associated with city facilities, consistent with community needs for services and efficient and cost effective delivery of services and with due regard for the social and economic impacts of such facilities upon the areas surrounding the sites.” (Charter §203). The Criteria for the Location of City Facilities has been in effect since 1991, and they are applied whenever the city sites a new facility by purchase or new lease.

The Criteria are intended to be part of a fair and open process with significant and early community involvement. While the Fair Share Criteria do not dictate any particular outcome, the sponsoring agency and the City Planning Commission must consider the Fair Share Criteria in siting facilities to assist in balancing a number of factors, such as community needs for services; efficient and cost-effective delivery of those services; effects on community stability and revitalization; and broad geographic distribution of facilities. Certain criteria (set forth in Article

4.1) apply to all facility siting or expansions, while additional criteria (set forth in Article 5.1) apply to the siting or expansion of “local or neighborhood facilities.” Other criteria are to be considered for the siting of a “regional or citywide facility” (Article 6.1).

## **BACKGROUND**

In 1999, the project site was rezoned from M1-5 to M6-2A as part of the larger Chelsea rezoning to reflect the area’s built character and to provide opportunities for new residential development (C 990453 ZMM). The project site is located two blocks south of an M1-6D zoning district, which was established in 2011 to preserve affordable office and light industrial space and to facilitate contextual infill residential and ground floor retail development (C 100063 ZMM and N110285 ZRY).

### **Site Description**

The project site is a 6,300 square foot lot located at 241 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues (Block 776, Lot 12) in a C6-2A zoning district. The C6-2A zoning allows for a commercial Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 6.0. The project site is currently improved with an approximately 33,725 zoning square foot building (5.4 FAR) that houses a public parking garage containing 225 parking spaces, a small dry cleaners occupying a portion of the ground floor, and a fire prevention business occupying a portion of the second floor. The parking garage is accessed via a 35-foot curb cut on West 26<sup>th</sup> Street, and there are three individual garage entrances situated along the curb cut. The existing building has six floors and is approximately 100 feet in height.

The three businesses on site will be displaced by the Proposed Actions. The parking garage, which is owned and operated by the property owner, will cease operation. The fire prevention business, which is also owned by the property owner, will relocate to another facility in their portfolio in the Bronx, Queens, or Manhattan. The dry cleaner will try to relocate across the street to another building owned by the current property owner.

### **Area Context**

The project site is located in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan, within Community District 5. Land uses within the study area vary, and include multifamily apartment buildings, commercial uses, mixed residential and commercial uses, and public facility and institution uses. Immediately to the west of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 26<sup>th</sup> Street is a 22-story apartment building with 186 units which is part of the Penn South development, a limited-equity housing cooperative. In total, the Penn South development is a 10-tower development built in 1962.

A majority of the western portion of the study area is comprised of mixed residential and commercial uses. To the east of the project site, closer to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, land uses vary, with a mix of multifamily residences, commercial uses, mixed residential and commercial uses, and community facilities and institutions, including a portion of the Fashion Institute of Technology. Additionally, the Chelsea Television Studios are on West 26<sup>th</sup> Street due east of the project site.

Buildings in the area generally range from eight to 15 stories, and as high as 22 stories. There are also several buildings between two and five stories.

The project site has good vehicular and transportation access. West 26<sup>th</sup> Street is a crosstown street that carries eastbound traffic, and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues carry southbound and northbound traffic, respectively. The site is served by multiple subway routes: the I line runs beneath 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and has a stop at 28<sup>th</sup> Street, and the C and E lines run beneath 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and have a stop at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. In addition, the project site is a walkable five blocks away from Penn Station, which offers regional and long-distance service through Amtrak and New Jersey Transit. Bus lines in the area include the M20 bus, which runs between Lincoln Center and South Ferry with uptown service along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and downtown service along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The M23 Select Bus service runs crosstown along 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and stops three blocks south of the project site.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed site selection and acquisition would permit the NYPD and DCAS to acquire the project site to house the headquarters of the NYPD's Bomb Squad. The primary responsibility and mission of the Bomb Squad is the investigation and mitigation of suspicious packages, articles, devices, and potentially explosive substances. In addition, the Bomb Squad conducts explosive hazard sweeps for VIPs, and sweep and standby response services at high profile events. The Bomb Squad also investigates and disposes of all explosive materials coming into the possession of the NYPD. However, this disposal takes place at the Rodman's Neck facility in the Bronx and would never take place at the project site.

The new headquarters at the project site would service all five boroughs. Currently, the Bomb Squad is located at the NYPD's 6<sup>th</sup> Precinct at 233 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Over time, staff and required response and safety equipment for Bomb Squad operations have significantly increased, exceeding its current capacity at the 6<sup>th</sup> Precinct. In particular, the equipment load has substantially grown due to the advances in technology, and this is one of the primary reasons driving the need for a new facility. There is also the need for specialty Bomb Squad vehicles to be parked and stored in a climate-controlled environment. Furthermore, additional space and amenities are needed to accommodate training and exercises, including for canine units and robots, and for meetings and information sharing with outside intelligence groups.

The existing building at 241 West 26th Street would be renovated to suit the NYPD's current and projected needs. While the built FAR of 5.4 does not use all of the permitted floor area, the proposed project will not enlarge the building, and all renovation work will take place within the building. On the ground floor of the building, there will be parking and storage for six (6) NYPD vehicles related to the Bomb Squad's operations, including two Heavy Response Vehicles, two Light Response Vehicles, and one Bearcat, an armored bomb disposal vehicle. In addition, on the second floor, there will be nine (9) accessory parking spaces available only for NYPD departmental issued vehicles assigned to the Bomb Squad, for a total of fifteen (15) parking spaces at the project site.

Thirty-nine (39) uniformed employees would be based at the project site over three eight-hour shifts per day. Approximately eight employees would be on site at any given time, with a one-hour overlap between shifts where employees from both shifts would be present. The applicants estimate that approximately half of the employees on the project site at any given moment will

have arrived by public transit while others will have arrived by car. Those arriving by personal car will park on the street in proximity to the project site, while those arriving by NYPD department issued vehicles assigned to the Bomb Squad may park in one of the accessory parking spaces on the second floor.

The specific location in Chelsea was chosen to allow for reasonable response times to areas of New York City that are considered to be sensitive targets, such as Midtown Manhattan and Lower Manhattan/Financial District.

## **COMMUNITY BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

At its regularly scheduled Full Board meeting on May 10th, 2018, Manhattan Community Board 5 (CB5) voted to adopt a resolution recommending denial of the application unless the applicants secure a commitment from the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to explore and institute an effective means to ensure clear passage of emergency vehicles along 26th Street; and that the applicants ensure the issuance of a traffic study examining the detailed impact of their operation on 26th Street, to ensure that solid data is used to preserve the quality of life along the block, as well as to ensure the efficacy of emergency response teams in times of traffic congestion along the block.

CB5 acknowledged the responsibility and mission of the Bomb Squad, and although there is acute concern about parking and congestion on the block, CB5 recognized that the proposed project would replace a 225-space commercial parking garage currently on location. The applicants state that there would be no dedicated parking spaces on the street as part of the application, and that the replacement of the existing parking garage would represent a net reduction in the impact of vehicular traffic from the block.

In response to CB5's concerns regarding the use of sirens on the block, the applicants reiterated their commitment never to use sirens until off the block and onto an adjacent avenue, and will look into ways to trigger red lights at adjacent intersections in times of emergency response to ensure a clear path for emergency vehicles.

CB5 also acknowledged that throughout the Bomb Squad's history at its current location on 10th Street, there has only been one complaint lodged regarding noise from HVAC equipment, which was successfully addressed.

In sum, CB5 remains keenly interested in obtaining more information from DOT in the form of a traffic study examining the specific concerns of congestion at peak times on 26th street, not only to accurately address quality-of-life issues, but also to ensure effective operations of the Bomb Squad.

## **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

The NYPD Bomb Squad fulfills a crucial safety function for the city. Although the nature of the work is such that we would ideally never have to know about all that the Bomb Squad does, it is clear that their need to grow and develop is a reality of the times. Given the advent of new

technology, the importance of proper equipment and training, and the increasing sophistication of their operational work, it is sensible for the Bomb Squad to secure a separate building outside of their current space at the NYPD's 6<sup>th</sup> Precinct on 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

The project site selected at 241 West 24<sup>th</sup> Street has many advantages. The proposed project would be replacing a commercial parking garage with 225 parking spaces. The Borough President has consistently commented on the importance of taking into account access to mass transit when considering the appropriateness of parking for a neighborhood. The project site is located in what might be one of the most transit-rich neighborhoods in all of North America, as it is not only adjacent to multiple subway and bus lines, but also walkable to regional transportation options at Penn Station. The replacement of a parking garage on this block should represent a net reduction of traffic impacts, which is a major concern of the community.

The two other businesses currently onsite have plans for relocation involving other properties owned by the current property owner. The fire prevention business will be moved to some other location yet to be determined in the property owner's portfolio, while the dry cleaner business will attempt to move to a location across the street.

The Borough President recognizes the desire of CB5 for more detailed information regarding the traffic conditions of West 26<sup>th</sup> Street, both for neighborhood quality of life and for effective emergency response for the Bomb Squad. In conversation with the applicants, Borough President staff followed up on some of the issues raised by CB5. With respect to preemptive signaling for emergency response, DOT's Signals Division informed the applicants that they do not approve preemptive signals for any agency other than the New York City Fire Department. DOT also communicated that the protected bike lanes being installed on 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets have been planned with extensive feedback from relevant parties to ensure emergency vehicle clearance. Furthermore, according to DOT, any additional traffic study of the project site area is not warranted, given the number of staff to be stationed at the proposed project and the vehicular trips to be generated.

The Borough President believes that the proposed project would not lead to undue traffic impacts, and given its replacement of a 225-space parking garage, it should represent an amelioration of traffic conditions. The Borough President further encourages NYPD Bomb Squad to continue being a good neighbor here on 26<sup>th</sup> Street as they have been on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and to commit to return to CB5 to give updates on operations and address future concerns as needed.

#### **BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S RECOMMENDATION**

Therefore, the Manhattan Borough President recommends **approval** of ULURP Application No. C 180296 ZSM.



Gale A. Brewer  
Manhattan Borough President