Frequently Asked Questions: About the Project Site
181 Mercer Street Project

What kind of protection will be installed around the project site?

In advance of the start of construction, a sound attenuating construction fence was installed around the perimeter of the 181 Mercer Street site. The fence’s height – up to 15 feet – will act as sound barrier, minimizing construction noise emanating from the site. Per the NYC Department of Transportation, an 8 foot fence is scheduled to be installed across from the commercial buildings on Mercer Street. The perimeter location of the fence was approved by the NYC Department of Buildings and the NYC Department of Transportation and may change to accommodate different phases of the project. A site map with fence location can be found on the 181 Mercer Street construction webpage.

Will parking spaces be lost during the project?

Some parking spaces on the north and south side of Bleecker Street, the north side of Houston Street, the east side of Mercer Street, and all parking spaces on the west side of Mercer Street from Bleecker Street to Houston Street, will be rendered inaccessible by the construction fence and construction activity at the site.

Will pedestrian traffic be affected?

Pedestrian traffic will be accommodated by a lane closure and jersey barriers on the southern side of Bleecker Street adjacent to the project site and sidewalk bridging will be installed along the northern perimeter of the project site. The south easternmost inner sidewalk entry along the Bleecker Street open space (between LaGuardia Place and Mercer Street) will be inaccessible to pedestrian traffic due to the location of the construction fence. Pedestrian traffic will be accommodated by a lane closure and jersey barriers on the northern side of Houston Street adjacent to the project site and sidewalk bridging will be installed along the southern perimeter of the project site, unless otherwise necessary for project work. The west side of Mercer Street along the project site will be inaccessible to pedestrians, but the east side of Mercer Street is scheduled to remain open for pedestrian traffic. The narrow path between 181 Mercer Street and Silver Towers (Greene Street walkway between Houston Street and Bleecker Street) will be inaccessible to pedestrian traffic due to the location of the construction fence. Walkway pavers will be removed and sod planted to restore the Oak Grove back to its original landmark condition in conjunction with the installation of the construction fence. Flagmen are expected to be stationed at the intersection of Bleecker and Mercer Streets as needed.

Will vehicular traffic be affected during the project?

There will be some lane closures on the perimeter of the project site. Part of the northernmost travel lane of Houston Street adjacent to the project site will be closed to accommodate a pedestrian walkway. Along Houston Street adjacent to the project site, there will be two moving lanes to accommodate the construction fence and pedestrian walkway. Per the direction of the MTA and the DOT a lane divider will be installed at the approach to the intersection of Houston Street and Mercer Street to address pedestrian and bus safety concerns. The divider will limit traffic to bus stop pick-ups and drop-offs in the northernmost
lane of Houston Street (approaching the intersection of Mercer Street). Neighbors will be given advance notice of additional street closures required during the project.

**What will happen to the M21 bus stop located on the north side of Houston Street west of the project site?**

The M21 MTA bus stop will be relocated to the existing (X7, X9, and X10B) MTA bus stop on the north side of Houston Street between Broadway and Mercer Street. Please note that an existing M21 bus stop is located on the north side of Houston Street between Wooster Street and LaGuardia Place, one block west.

**What will happen to the trees around the project site?**

The trees located around the perimeter of the 181 Mercer Street site will be removed when the construction fence is installed.

Four smaller cherry trees located on the west side of Coles were successfully transplanted across the street on the north side of Bleecker Street, opposite 181 Mercer Street, earlier this year (and three new Kwanzan cherry trees were planted along with them). Accordingly, NYU also looked into whether it was possible to relocate the seven large Kwanzan cherry trees on the north side of the Coles gym to a site in the surrounding neighborhood.

The University hired an independent arborist to assess the trees viability for transplant. The arborist determined that only three of the seven trees might survive a transplant under the right conditions: a relocation site with irrigation, plenty of sunlight, and - given the “rootball” requirements - a receiving hole measuring at least 8 feet in diameter. The University consulted with NYC Parks Department regarding potential relocation sites, but in the end, these requirements precluded relocating the trees in the local community as no suitable site was found.

Without a viable relocation site, NYU decided to donate the usable wood of the trees to a not-for-profit organization, Big Reuse, which reclaims building supplies, fixtures and furniture, as well as urban wood and re-purposes it into useful green building products. The organization also trains disadvantaged New Yorkers in the skills necessary to start a career in sustainable building industries.

As is customary with construction projects in New York that involve tree removal, NYU is paying restitution to the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, and those funds will be used to plant new trees in New York City. In addition, at the completion of the project, NYU will be responsible for planting new trees around the perimeter of 181 Mercer Street.

**Will access to the Mercer Houston Dog Run be affected during the project?**

Both the Houston Street and Silver Towers entrances to the Mercer Houston Dog Run are expected to remain open for the duration of the project. The Association will be given advance notice of work that may impede the use of either entrance.