FACT SHEET
NYU SPACE PLANNING: The Core Project

After five years of strategic planning and input from our internal and external community, NYU's Core Project was approved by the New York City Council in late July 2012. This approval grants the University a new “zoning envelope” in which it can construct new facilities over the coming years. NYU is now turning from strategic to tactical planning, beginning with a university-wide dialogue to establish priorities for core space within this envelope.

Background

- In 2002, a Transition Team report identified lack of space as a critical issue.
- In 2007, NYU undertook its first strategic plan for physical space.
- Potential overall need: 6 million square feet over 25 years in three main locations: NYU’s “Core” near Washington Square Park; Downtown Brooklyn; First Avenue Health Corridor.
- Identified space needs at the Core include classrooms, science and non-science research space, student dormitories, faculty offices, and performing arts facilities.
- The Core plan was required to go through a city approvals process (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) to modify the existing land-use rules that had governed the site since the 1960s.

The Core Project As Approved

- Grants permission for the University to develop 1.9 million square feet (above and below grade) on the two superblocks bounded by W. 3rd Street, Mercer Street, W. Houston Street and LaGuardia Place.
- The approvals regulate maximum building massings and heights, and open space and use.
- Of the overall space that could be added, we estimate that the breakdown is: 53% for academic use; 17% student housing; 9% athletic; 6% faculty housing; 7% community (non-NYU) use; 5% other (including retail and parking) - but some flexibility is built in.

- **Phase 1 (2014-2021): South Block:**
  - Development will start on the South Block and either the Coles or Morton Williams site can be built first. Construction will not begin until 2014 at the earliest. No architects or construction management teams have been hired.
  - Once the first building is underway, the entire site is considered vested.

- **Phase 2 (2022 and beyond): North Block:**
  - No development of the Washington Square Village block before 2022.
Other Features of the Plan as Required by City Approval

- Specified space must be created and donated for community (non-NYU) use
- Increased open space accessible to the public
- Commitment to maintain the newly created city-owned parks
- No hotel on either of the two superblocks
- No temporary gym on either of the two superblocks
- Granting the city an option until 2014 on the westernmost building on the south superblock to build a K-8 public school. If the city does not take this option, 25% of the above grade space of that building must be for community (non-NYU) use.

Process Going Forward

- The University Space Priorities Working Group - made up of faculty representatives appointed by the schools and the Faculty Senators Council, as well as representatives from the Student Senators Council and the Administrative Management Council - was formed in September 2012 to solicit meaningful input from our community.

- The Working Group is chaired by Professor Ted Magder from the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development.

- With the zoning envelope now defined, the Working Group has taken up the task of giving guidance to the University Administration on implementation of the Core project, including providing a crucial voice on plans for the initial building on the southern block; of taking account of the existing space needs of academic units and programs; and of listening to the implications of the project for members of the University community.

- The Working Group deliberates in an open manner, soliciting input from the entire NYU community. It has created a designated website on which it posts material, solicits input and makes available reports of its deliberations. [http://www.nyu.edu/about/university-initiatives/space-priorities.html](http://www.nyu.edu/about/university-initiatives/space-priorities.html)

- Since its inception, the Working Group has reviewed numerous documents and received new material on all facets of space as a University resource and strategic need. The Working Group has met 17 times and formed three subcommittees to address relevant topics – Quality of Life, Finance, and Space. In the spring of 2013, the Working Group convened three Town Hall meetings, one on each topic.

- In July 2013, the Working Group issued an interim report with three key findings: 1) the need for academic space is urgent and real, a significant portion of which can only be met on the south block; 2) better stewardship of the superblocks and improving community relations must be a high priority; 3) financial planning includes reasonably conservative and prudent assumptions for capital construction.
The Working Group is reconvening this fall to continue its deliberations and receive and consider responses to the Interim Report. Two Town Hall meetings are scheduled for September; a Final Report is scheduled for December 2013.

The University will not undertake any construction authorized by the NYU Core Project, beyond routine maintenance and required grounds improvement projects, before the receipt of the Working Group’s report in December 2013.

What’s Happening Now

Two lawsuits have been commenced by opponents of the NYU Core Plan. The first action was brought by rent-stabilized tenants residing in Washington Square Village alleging that potential changes to the courtyard located between the two Washington Square Village buildings would deprive them of required services in violation of the Rent Stabilization Law. In March 2013, the lawsuit was dismissed and a notice of appeal has been filed; since then, there has been no further activity. The second lawsuit, an Article 78 proceeding, was commenced by various community groups and certain NYU faculty members to overturn the City Council’s approval of the NYU Core Plan on the grounds that the Environmental Impact Statement was deficient and that portions of the superblocks are parkland and cannot be repurposed without additional approvals and procedures. The lawsuit was argued in State Supreme Court in July 2013 and a decision is expected in the fall/winter of 2013-14.

To honor commitments made during the land use review process, NYU is providing approximately 6,000 square feet of space in Washington Square Village for community use. In January 2014, a new childcare center will open in 4 WSV. The center will serve ages infant to pre-school and will be operated by a joint partnership with Creative Steps and University Settlement. In addition, Visiting Neighbors, a non-profit social service organization catering to senior citizens in the Greenwich Village community, will be moving into ground floor space in 3 WSV. The space is currently undergoing a modest renovation and is expected to be ready for occupancy before the end of the year.

To advance the creation and enhancement of public open space, also a land use approval commitment, NYU convened and incorporated the Open Space Operating Organization (“OSOO”) as a 501(c)3 non-profit entity. The OOO – comprised of one member each from Community Board 2, the Borough President’s Office, local City Councilwoman’s office, Department of Parks, and NYU – is charged with providing input into the design of new open space and monitoring open space operations and maintenance. NYU has retained a landscape architect to prepare concepts for new public open space along LaGuardia Place and Bleecker and Mercer Streets. The OOO is providing comment and feedback on the concepts currently, and as the concepts evolve into design drawings, NYU will work with the Parks Department to obtain required approvals from the Public Design Commission. The OOO will stay involved throughout the process.