

# Coles Redevelopment Fact Sheet

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In 2012, the New York City Council approved NYU's Core Project, granting a zoning envelope within which the University is able to construct new facilities over the coming years. Following the City Council's approval, the University Space Priorities Working Group (described below) recommended that NYU move forward with the redevelopment of the Coles Sports and Recreation Center. The University has begun the planning process for the Coles redevelopment following a favorable ruling by the New York State Court of Appeals (described below).

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## Background

As far back as 2002, NYU's lack of space has been highlighted as a [critical need](#) in its path to sustained academic excellence. In 2007, NYU undertook its first strategic review of a plan for growth and determined a potential overall need of 6 million square feet over 25 years in three main locations: NYU's "Core" near Washington Square Park; Downtown Brooklyn; and the First Avenue Health Corridor.

## Approval Process

Ultimately, NYU sought approval for its Core Project under the City's land use approval process known as ULURP—Uniform Land Use Review Procedure—and sought, among other things, to amend the City map and modify existing restrictions applicable to the two superblocks owned by NYU. During the strategic planning process and throughout the ULURP, NYU held [hundreds of meetings](#) with local elected officials, community groups, civic organizations, faculty and students groups, and other stakeholders.

## University Space Priorities Working Group

Following the ULURP approvals, the [University Space Priorities Working Group](#), comprised of NYU faculty, students, and administrative members, was established to review priorities and provide recommendations for the utilization of the zoning envelope defined by the City. After an 18-month process of consultation and deliberation, the Working Group recommended that NYU construct a mixed-use building on the current site of the Coles Sports Center. The [Coles Redevelopment](#) will provide much needed new classrooms, spaces for our performing arts programs, student and faculty housing, and athletic and recreational facilities to replace Coles.

## The Legal Process

An Article 78 proceeding was initiated by various community groups and certain NYU faculty members, which sought, among other things, to overturn the City Council's approval of NYU's Core Plan. On June 30, 2015, a decision was rendered by the New York State Court of Appeals in favor of NYU and the City of New York, clearing the way for the University to proceed with the Core Plan project. This was the final phase of this litigation.

One other suit filed by certain rent-stabilized tenants residing in Washington Square Village alleged that changes proposed to the interior courtyard between the two Washington Square Village buildings would deprive them of services required by the Rent Stabilization Law. This lawsuit [was dismissed](#) in March 2013. The plaintiffs filed a notice of appeal but the time by which they were required to perfect their appeal had expired.

## The Core Plan as Approved

The City Council's approval grants NYU permission to develop new facilities on the two superblocks bounded by West 3rd Street and West Houston Street to the north and south, and by Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place to the east and west, and also provides for the creation of additional open space, new landscape improvements and community facilities on the blocks.

## Community Improvement Requirements

The plan features a number of community-focused and open space improvements:

### Community Facility Space

The approvals require certain allocations of [community facility space](#). Some of those commitments have already been implemented:

- NYU renovated space in 4 Washington Square Village to create a home for the Creative Steps Early Child Care Center, part of University Settlement. The Center, [which opened in January 2014](#), serves infant to preschool-aged children. The facility can serve as many as 75 children.
- NYU renovated space in 3 Washington Square Village to create a home for Visiting Neighbors, a non-profit social service/outreach and advocacy organization catering to senior citizens in Greenwich Village and lower Manhattan. Visiting Neighbors [moved into its space](#) in February 2014.
- NYU recently dedicated space to the Washington Square Village Tenants Association to conduct meetings and activities.
- The new building on the site of the Coles Sports Center will contain a public atrium on the ground floor level accessible to pedestrians, as well as an independently-operated community facility oriented towards the local elderly population. Together these uses, which need not be adjacent or related, must provide a minimum of 7,500 square feet of community facility space.

### Open Space

The approvals increase the amount of public open space on the North and South Blocks and secure commitments for maintenance.

- NYU will construct four new playgrounds, which will be open to the public and accommodate a range of activities, including bicycle/tricycle riding, toddler play areas, and older child play areas.
- NYU will create new public seating, gardens, and walking areas on both blocks.
- NYU will fund the building and maintenance of these public open spaces.
- The Plan approves the mapping of certain City-owned areas along Mercer Street and LaGuardia Place between Bleecker and West 3rd Streets as parkland. They will remain mapped as parkland in perpetuity.
- NYU has committed to maintaining the newly created city-owned parks.
- A separate 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization has been formed to monitor NYU's compliance with open space maintenance agreements. The Open Space Oversight Organization (OSOO) is comprised of one member each from Community Board 2, the Manhattan Borough President's Office, the local City Council Member's office, Department of Parks and Recreation, and NYU.

NYU has retained a landscape architect to prepare design concepts for certain new public open spaces along sections of LaGuardia Place and Bleecker Street. The NYC Parks Department has helped shape the designs and in spring 2014 the Open Space Oversight Organization provided comment and feedback on the concepts. The designs require approval by the NYC Public Design Commission, a process that will start by fall 2015.

### Public School

The ULURP approvals grant the School Construction Authority [the option to build a K-8 public school](#) on the current site of the Morton Williams supermarket at the corner of LaGuardia Place and Bleecker Street. The University [extended](#) the time period during which the NYC School Construction Authority (SCA) has the option to decide on the Bleecker Street site from the original deadline of December 31, 2014 to December 31, 2018. If it does not select this option, then, if NYU elects to construct a building on the site, 25,000 sq. ft. of that building's above-grade space must be dedicated to community uses.

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## **The Process Moving Forward**

### **Selection of the Coles Redevelopment Architects**

On December 17, the University announced the selection of an outstanding [architectural partnership](#)—[Davis Brody Bond](#) and [Kieran Timberlake](#)—to design the new facility that will be built where the Coles Sports Center currently stands. The architects—working with specialty consultants for each major building use—have begun meeting with the building's eventual end users to ascertain space needs and preferences. The programming process forms a detailed understanding of space needs and translates them into more exact specifications. A [Coles Redevelopment Project website](#) has been created.

### **Interim Sports and Recreation Plan during Coles Site Construction**

In the absence of the University's main sports and recreation center, NYU has established a strategy to maintain a fitness experience and athletics program during the Coles site redevelopment. NYU is creating a fitness center at 404 Lafayette Street that will offer strength training, cardio exercise, recreation classes and locker rooms. The University is also extending operating hours at the Palladium Athletic Facility and has opened a newly enhanced fitness center at the NYU Polytechnic School of Engineering in Brooklyn.

The needs of our student athletes, including the ability to hold practices and competitions for intercollegiate sports teams and intramural activities, will be met through arrangements with nearby colleges, universities, and other facilities. The Palladium will serve as the temporary hub for the community of student athletes. It is important to note that no intercollegiate club or varsity team will be eliminated due to the temporary closure of Coles. This strategy has been developed in consultation with the Coles Advisory Committee, which was formed in May 2014 and includes representatives - many of whom are Coles users - from the faculty, student body, Athletics Department, and administration.

### **Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee**

The Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee was formed in May 2014 at the recommendation of the Space Priorities Working Group. It is [comprised](#) of NYU faculty, students, and administrators, as well as representatives from the Washington Square Village and Silver Towers tenants' associations. The Committee will provide ongoing input regarding quality-of-life issues on the Superblocks before, during, and after construction.

The Committee maintains a public [website](#) and issued its first [Semi-Annual Report](#) describing its first nine months of work including: involvement in the Coles Redevelopment architect selection process, engagement of an independent consultant to set [high standards](#) for the mitigation of the effects of construction, and development of protocols for use of open common spaces on the superblocks.

