MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

LAURENCE MASLON

On behalf of the Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee, I am very pleased to share with you our first semi-annual progress report. This Committee was created as an extension of the University Space Priorities Working Group (which met from October of 2012 to March of 2014), and has been in existence since May of 2014. Our Stewardship Committee prioritized two mandates from the USPWG: to provide an independent monitor to ensure that all requirements for construction process on the Coles site are met and to work closely with the University to improve conditions for current residents of the superblocks. As an ongoing mission, the Stewardship Committee has opened up some new and essential channels of communication with the University that benefit from a variety of perspectives within our communities: geographical, professional, pedagogical, spiritual, and otherwise.

I have taught and lived at New York University for twenty years. I make my professional home at the Tisch School of the Arts’ Graduate Acting Program and I make my domestic home at 3 Washington Square Village. Like many of you, I have raised a family here. Also, like many of you, I have experienced numerous frustrations and challenges living on the superblocks, but I care deeply about improving the quality of life for residents, faculty, students, and the surrounding community.

With that in mind, I am immensely buoyed by the University’s commitment to the Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee and by their openness to our concerns and advice. As you’ll see from the attached report, our committee members, most of whom reside on the superblocks, represent a wide cross-section of the NYU community. In our first nine months of convention, we have worked with the University to prioritize the mission of the Coles Redevelopment Site; to select a world-class architectural team for the site; to set a high standard for the mitigation of the effects of construction; to develop protocols for the use of our open common spaces; and, in general, to make our voices and concerns heard by University leadership. The specific tasks we undertook—and continue to undertake—are effectively chronicled in the attached report. I hope you’ll agree that these tasks, and the manner in which they were undertaken, represent the beginning of a new level of collaboration between the larger NYU community—faculty, students, staff, residents—and University leadership.

But our work is only beginning. In addition to the ongoing focus on the Coles Redevelopment Site, we are working to improve communications with the University; introduce our new architecture team to the community; ameliorate our green spaces and open spaces; make our tenants’ associations more representative and effective; integrate the aspirations of our students; and better bring forward your concerns in ways that will benefit the quality of life for all concerned.

Your work begins as well. It is very easy—often far more convenient—to opt for a skeptical stance regarding engagement with the University on these issues. But saying “no” is only an option; it’s not an opportunity. Please take the time to read the attached report; it will answer many questions and, hopefully, prompt many more responses. Also, please visit the Committee’s website to learn more about its work and to submit comments and questions for consideration.

The University has begun to do its share to redefine its relationship with the community with the establishment of this Committee. We need each of you to be responsive to our work, so that the University can, in turn, be responsible to each of us.
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I. COMMITTEE FORMATION, COMPOSITION, AND MEETINGS

Following the recommendation of the University Space Priorities Working Group (“USPWG”), which issued its final report in March 2014, the University established the Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee (“SSAC” or “the Committee”). The Working Group’s recommendation was to create a subsequent stewardship committee charged with providing “ongoing assessment and advice for the maintenance and improvement of quality-of-life issues concerning University properties on the Superblocks before, during, and after any construction.”*

Formed in May 2014, the Superblock Stewardship Advisory Committee comprises:†

• Five faculty selected by the Faculty Councils
• Two faculty selected by the University
• Two students appointed by the Student Senators Council
• One representative from each of the tenants associations (Washington Square Village and Silver Towers)
• One administrator appointed by the Administrative Management Council
• Three members of the Coles Project Team
• Two members of the University Leadership

The Committee has been chaired since its inception by Laurence Maslon, Arts Professor from the Tisch School of the Arts and resident of Washington Square Village. Professor Maslon also served as chair of the Stewardship and Quality of Life Committee of the University Space Priorities Working Group—the specific subgroup that devised the recommendations regarding ongoing stewardship and the formation of a committee. (See Appendix A for a list of the full membership of the Stewardship Committee.)

Responsive to the USPWG final report, the Committee’s charge includes providing ongoing guidance to the University and a forum for consultation on quality-of-life issues on both blocks before, during, and after construction.‡ Specifically, the Committee provides advice to the University on:

• Improvements to the Superblocks, including the obligations the University must fulfill under its agreement with the City leading up to the start of construction, the relocation of services currently provided by the Coles Sports Center, and other planned improvements;

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* See USPWG Final Report, p. 38 for the full text of the relevant recommendation.
† See http://www.nyu.edu/about/university-initiatives/space-planning-and-stewardship/space-stewardship/Membership.html for a full roster.
‡ The Committee’s full charge is available online at: http://www.nyu.edu/about/university-initiatives/space-planning-and-stewardship/space-stewardship.html
• The design process, including input on the architect selection and feedback on the design of a new building;
• Overall quality-of-life on the Superblocks, including selection of an independent consultant, efforts to mitigate the effects of construction, as well as more general quality-of-life concerns; and
• Ongoing stewardship and communication between the University and the community.

The Committee came together in May 2014 and has held over a dozen meetings. Throughout the fall semester the group met on a bi-weekly basis in order to ensure that its involvement was contemporaneously expressed alongside the University’s timeline for moving forward with the Coles Redevelopment project. A full description of the Committee’s charge, membership, and activities, including summaries of each meeting, are available on its website:

http://www.nyu.edu/about/university-initiatives/space-planning-and-stewardship/space-stewardship.html

In addition, five members of the original USPWG now serve on the Stewardship Committee. As the SSAC was envisioned as a logical extension of the mission of the USPWG, this transition has provided a large measure of continuity and shared history between the two groups.
II. MAJOR ACTIVITIES

ARCHITECT SELECTION

The selection of an architect for the Coles Redevelopment project provided the Committee with its first, and most important, opportunity to actively participate in guiding the direction of the new building. Beginning in May, the Committee was involved in every stage of the architect selection process. The process began with providing input and advice to University leadership on a set of guiding principles which were then issued in a “request for qualifications” followed by a “request for proposals” to a set of architectural firms. The responses to the RFQ and RFP were thoroughly reviewed and the field was narrowed. In addition, the process included presentations by the finalists and culminated in the University’s selection, seven months later, of Davis Brody Bond and KieranTimberlake. The Committee (which has an advisory role, not a determining role) is supportive of the University’s assertion that the selection of an architect for the Coles Redevelopment was the most rigorous and inclusive such process in the University’s history, and is hopeful that such a participatory process represents a new paradigm for collaboration and consultation on major University initiatives moving forward. Below is a description of the architect selection process and the Committee’s involvement:

The architect selection process began with the development of a set of Guiding Principles, which would inform the creation of RFQ and RFP documents, and be used as criteria for selecting an architect. The Committee—which was given the opportunity to provide input on the criteria and their relative priority—felt strongly that design excellence, experience in designing buildings in a dense urban environment, responsiveness to context, and high standards of environmental sustainability should be emphasized. The final guiding principles, in order of priority, were as follows:

- Strong reputation for design excellence
- Successful experience designing multi-use buildings in dense urban environments, including in New York City
- High standards of environmental sustainability
- Design that is sensitive to environmental and cultural context
- Demonstrated responsiveness to diverse stakeholders
- Experience with the wide variety of planned program typologies
- Adequate firm size and capacity for a project of this scale, including a New York City office
- Demonstrated track record for design that meets budget and ability to deliver on schedule

* The first phases of the procurement process typically include a pre-qualification of potential candidates, known as a Request for Qualifications (or “RFQ”). Only those candidates that adequately meet the qualification criteria are invited to respond to a more detailed Request for Proposals (or “RFP”).
The Committee then provided input on an RFQ. During the Committee's review of the draft, it was strongly emphasized that the square footage recommendations for the overall size of Coles and for the allocation of uses put forth in the USPWG final report be included in the guidance to the architectural firms. The University honored this preference and released the RFQ to 16 architecture firms of national and international prominence, the list of which was shared with the Committee in advance. The candidate firms were selected based on a preliminary analysis of their ability to satisfy the guiding principles and with input from the NYU Board of Trustees Real Estate Committee.

Qualifications were received from 15 of the 16 firms in June 2014. The SSAC reviewed and discussed each of the firms' statements of qualifications and provided input on a rank ordering of firms. That rank ordering comported with the assessment provided NYU's Office of Construction Management ("OCM"), and six firms were then invited to submit proposals. Simultaneously with the review of the 15 firms' qualifications, the Committee reviewed a draft Request for Proposals, which asked firms to provide additional information on their team structure, relevant experience, and project understanding.

This RFP, including input from the Committee, was sent to six firms. Five firms submitted proposals; one firm declined to proceed further with a proposal. The proposals were detailed and extensive evaluations of the challenges of the building on the Coles site, as well as the respective firms' proposed approaches to those challenges; each proposal was at least 100 pages long. After a holistic review of the proposals in August 2014, the Committee agreed with OCM's assessment that, given the strength of presentation and high level of qualification among the firms, all five should be invited to NYU for make presentations.

In early September 2014, all five firms delivered presentations in which they were asked to speak to their qualification and overall design approach to the Coles Redevelopment project. A cross-section of University stakeholders—including members of the Board of Trustees, University administrators, relevant deans, selected faculty with expertise, and the Committee—were invited to participate. Along with the team of University leaders who would ultimately decide on the architecture firm, SSAC Chair Larry Maslon served as an interlocutor with the architectural teams. Other Committee members were invited to serve as observers and attended many, if not most, of the presentations.

Following these meetings and opportunities to debrief with members of the University administration and OCM, who were responsible for making the final selection, two finalists were selected and it was agreed a process of further evaluation was useful and necessary to make the final decision.

Members of the Committee were invited to participate in this final round, which included additional presentations and site visits to prior projects completed by the finalist firms, many of which were for academic institutions. Those members of the SSAC who attended these sessions were then invited to meet with members of the University leadership to share their views of the finalists prior to a decision being made. While there were different positions from the SSAC members regarding the respective strengths and weaknesses of each finalist, the group felt comfortable advising University leadership that either of the finalist firms would be more than qualified to undertake this project.
In December 2014, the University selected the partnership of Davis Brody Bond and KieranTimberlake. The partnership distinguished itself in several key ways:

- Proven track record of highly-successful higher education projects across the country
- Leading efforts in achieving high standards of environmental sustainability
- Ability to produce unique, high-quality design
- Experience with multiple use and highly-complex projects

The Committee supports the University’s selection of Davis Brody Bond and KieranTimberlake as architects for the Coles Redevelopment, and is particularly encouraged by the firms’ track record of completing major projects at large institutions—including many preeminent universities—as well as by their focus on sustainable design. The Committee also feels it important that the University undertake a deliberate and thoughtful process of introducing the architects to the community to provide input and generate enthusiasm, and to ensure ongoing consultation and communication between the architects and broad segments of the NYU community.

In early February 2015, at its first meeting of the Spring semester, members of the architectural team provided the Committee with an overview of the firms’ qualifications and conducted a visioning session. During this session, members of the Committee emphasized that the architects should consider the ways in which the building engages with its surrounding physical, environmental, and community contexts.

The Committee looks forward to continuing to interact with the architectural team as it engages with the community and begins to develop a program for the building. The architectural team has studied the USPWG final report in depth and concluded that it represents,

...an articulate and thorough examination of space needs in the context of significant community, stewardship, real estate, and financial concerns [and] the need for space expressed in the report is the most urgent we have seen in three decades of working at major universities.

The Committee expects that it will be kept abreast of major trade-offs and any proposed deviations from the USPWG recommendations that may result from a more in-depth examination of academic needs and the constraints of the building envelope approved by the City, and will continue to advise on the ways in which any such issues are resolved.

INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

The USPWG’s March 2014 final report, in addition to recommending the establishment of a stewardship committee, also advised that NYU:
Engage an independent consultant with expertise in community impacts of construction projects before any construction begins, to assess whether the procedures outlined in the Restrictive Declaration are adequate, and to examine any construction plans for both short- and long-term effects on the neighboring community.*

To fulfill this recommendation, a Subcommittee focused on Construction/Mitigation issues guided a process—with assistance from OCM—to select an independent consultant. The Subcommittee approved drafts of both RFQ and RFP documents, which called for the consultant to assess the adequacy of the mitigation requirements set forth as part of the City’s approval of the project, as memorialized in the Restrictive Declaration of July 2012.† The Subcommittee also reviewed proposals and interviewed candidate firms in October 2014.

STV, Incorporated (“STV”) was selected as the independent consultant. As part of its work, STV collaborated with a subcommittee of SSAC members who emphasized the importance of a report that would be as useful and readable as possible to the various communities affected by the project. Incorporating this feedback, STV has produced a comprehensive report that compared the requirements in the Restrictive Declaration with the relevant aspects of city, state, and national regulations (i.e., code and best practices) and has recommended any enhancements where applicable. Specifically, they examined the following areas (known, technically, as “Project Components Related to the Environment” or “PCREs”):

- Air Emissions
- Dust Control
- Noise
- Vibration Reduction
- Dewatering
- Pest Management
- Hazardous Materials Remediation and Protection
- Historical and Cultural Resource Protection
- Traffic

STV’s analysis concludes that:

- The Restrictive Declaration sets forth construction performance conditions that meet or exceed City and State requirements and some National standards for construction impact mitigation in each of the PCRE categories.
- The Restrictive Declaration provides for a conservative approach to construction, which incorporates reasonable measures to reduce potentially negative effects on quality of life for residents, pedestrians, and businesses surrounding the South Block.

† The Restrictive Declaration of Large Scale General Development (“Restrictive Declaration”) is a legally binding document generated by the New York City Department of City Planning during the land use approvals process, and signed by NYU as a condition of the approvals granted. It outlines requirements for many aspects of the Core Project, including project components relating to the environment for construction, the new buildings, and sustainability; environmental mitigation; appointment of a third-party construction monitor; project phasing and sequencing of the buildings and open space; and open space requirements.
• The requirements set forth in theRestrictive Declaration, as they apply to the South Block/Coles Site Redevelopment are strict, and include some unusual additional requirements to provide for protection of the surrounding Greenwich Village community during construction. It must be acknowledged that there could be individual grievances for some construction activities, but the finding of this evaluation is that the Restrictive Declaration sets forth the correct procedures and substantive requirements, and if followed as planned will lead to a well-controlled construction environment and project.

A full copy of STV’s report, as well as detailed technical matrices for each mitigation category, is available on the Committee’s website.

COMMUNITY OPEN SPACES

The Committee also formed a sub-group to focus on issues related to the ongoing stewardship of the superblocks. During Fall 2014, the Subcommittee began to develop a typology for future use of the existing open spaces on the superblocks, with the aspiration of creating an organic and consistent set of protocols for the use of open space. A number of data points were provided to the Subcommittee to facilitate this discussion, including an informal demographic summary of residential units.

Upon examining the current open spaces, a basic desire to categorize spaces in a way that incorporates multiple uses and acknowledges the myriad needs of residents (including children) emerged, with the hope that they would be complementary rather than contradictory. One possible typology could include the designation of spaces along a continuum of appropriate and allowable activity. Some open spaces might be open to a higher level of activity and physical play (Type “A”), while others might invite a lower level of active use (Type “B”). The Subcommittee drafted a preliminary grouping of the open spaces, and also identified those that would require cooperation with the city and community groups (e.g., the LMNOP playground on Mercer Street) and those that are already slated for further improvements as part of the NYU Core Plan (e.g., the open Space in front of the LaGuardia retail strip and the seating area on Bleecker Street).

This draft typology classified spaces as follows:

Washington Square Village
• Type A: Key Park; Empty open area behind BareBurger
• Type B: Sasaki Garden
• Requires further study: LMNOP, South staging area (between Washington Square Village buildings #2 and #4), Mercer St. corners, Community Agriculture plot

Silver Towers
• Type A: Oak Grove
• Type B: Grass plaza around Bust of Sylvette
• Requires further study: Urban Farm, Hardscape plaza
It is important to note that this draft classification represents the Committee’s initial thinking on the subject of open spaces. The Committee hopes to consult with an outside expert or experts to help further refine these ideas and align them with best practices in urban land and parks management. A number of further issues have yet to be addressed—including dogs, fencing, changes to use based on seasons, and signage. The question of enforcement, and of security more generally, is also an ongoing conversation with NYU Operations. The Committee hopes to continue discussions about these factors into the Spring semester.

In addition, any discussion about changes to the current open space usage practices must only be done, the Committee believes, after extensive consultation with residents and members of the community.

OTHER

In addition, the Committee has also provided input to the University on other issues and projects related to the Coles Redevelopment and quality-of-life more broadly, including:

- Providing for the needs of fitness and athletic users during the period when Coles is offline;
- Maintaining the open spaces—including sidewalks, plantings, and fenced areas—on the superblocks;
- Communicating with faculty, and the broader community of residents, about ongoing projects and improvements on the superblocks, including window replacement, sidewalk repair, roof replacement, etc.; and
- Ensuring the safety and security of residents of both complexes.
III. CONCLUSION

The Committee plans to continue to be a conduit for stakeholder input and advice on both the Coles redevelopment project, as well as quality-of-life issues on the superblocks more generally. The University has demonstrated an unprecedented commitment, in cooperation with members of its various constituencies, to improving engagement on major initiatives, including those under the purview of this Committee. It is the SSAC’s hope that the level of engagement with University leadership continues to prove fruitful, and that the process will yield benefits for all involved.

Members of the community are encouraged to contact the Committee via its website:

http://www.nyu.edu/about/university-initiatives/space-planning-and-stewardship/space-stewardship.html
# Appendix A.
## Roster of Committee Members

**Chair**

Laurence Maslon  
Arts Professor, Tisch School of the Arts

**Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty**

- **Sewin Chan**  
  Associate Professor, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service

- **Angela Kamer**  
  Associate Professor, College of Dentistry

- **Jeff Goodwin**  
  Professor, Faculty of Arts and Science

- **Allen Mincer**  
  Professor, Faculty of Arts and Science

**Full-Time Non-Tenure Track/Contract Faculty**

- **Neal Herman**  
  Clinical Professor, College of Dentistry

- **Rosemary Scanlon**  
  Clinical Associate Professor and Divisional Dean of the Schack Institute of Real Estate, School of Professional Studies

**Student Senators Council**

- **Michael Hengerer**  
  Undergraduate Student, Gallatin School of Individualized Study

- **Julia O'Connor**  
  Undergraduate Student, College of Arts and Science

**Administrative Management Council**

- **Barbara Albrecht**  
  Director, Property Design, Development and Services, Leonard N. Stern School of Business

**Tenants Associations**

- **Anne Hearn**  
  Washington Square Village Tenants Association

- **Eero Simoncelli**  
  Silver Towers Tenants Association
DIVISION OF OPERATIONS
Alison Leary
Executive Vice President of Operations

ADMINISTRATION LIAISON (ex-officio)
Lynne Brown
Senior Vice President, University Relations and Public Affairs

COLES PROJECT TEAM (ex-officio)
Rachel Belsky
Project Director

Michael Patullo
Deputy Chief of Staff

Heather Skolnick
Communications Manager, Government and Community Affairs
APPENDIX B.
LIST OF COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

SUMMER/FALL 2014

• May 9, 2014
• June 9, 2014
• June 19, 2014
• June 26, 2014
• July 15, 2014
• August 28, 2014
• September 23, 2014
• October 7, 2014
• October 21, 2014
• November 18, 2014
• December 2, 2014
• December 16, 2014

SPRING 2015

• February 2, 2015
• February 17, 2015
• March 2, 2015
• March 16, 2015
• March 30, 2015
• April 13, 2015
• April 27, 2015
• May 11, 2015