



# Memorandum

To: City Council  
From: Councilor Laredo, Chair of the Land Use Committee  
Re: Docket #179-16, #180-16  
Date: March 10, 2017

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On March 20, 2017, between first and second call at our full City Council meeting, the Land Use Committee will meet to discuss the Washington Place project (#179-16 / #180-16). I invite all Councilors to attend this meeting and participate in the discussion.

As you are aware, the Land Use Committee has been actively considering this project since June, 2016. Recently, the petitioner filed a motion to withdraw both the re-zoning and special permit petitions and announced its intention to proceed via a 40B project, based on the petitioner's belief that it did not have the necessary 18 votes to re-zone the site to MU4. Given how much time and effort the Land Use Committee, the petitioner, and members of the public have put into this project, I thought it best to have a public session so that all Councilors could join the Land Use Committee to discuss the project in a public setting before we acted on the request to withdraw. The petitioner agreed with this suggestion and President Lennon has agreed to allow the Land Use Committee to meet between first and second call so that all Councilors can participate.

I will not be asking for any votes at this session. If, after we conclude the Land Use Committee meeting on March 20th, the petitioner decides that it wants the Council to act on the requests to withdraw, we will do so at a subsequent Land Use Committee meeting. On the other hand, if the petitioner does not want us to act on the requests to withdraw, we will continue our work in the Land Use Committee to craft a board order for consideration by the full Council. The public hearing remains open.

The clerk's office will distribute copies of the latest set of plans to all Councilors prior to the meeting and I ask that prior to the meeting all of us familiarize ourselves (if we have not done so already) with the details of the project by reviewing the materials on the City website.

We will begin our discussion with a brief (ten minute) presentation by the planning department about the project followed by a discussion among Councilors regarding their thoughts on the project to date and questions and concerns various Councilors may have. Representatives of the petitioner as well as the petitioner's counsel will be present to answer questions and respond to comments and suggestions.

To date, the following appear to be the key issues:

- a. the height of the buildings;
- b. the number of units;
- c. the number of affordable units and the introduction of additional units for moderate income people;
- d. the mix of housing and commercial space; and
- e. the effect the project will have on the immediate abutters, including shadows and the location of the entrance on Walnut Street.

Please be prepared, particularly if you have concerns about any or all of these issues, to articulate your concerns and suggest how they might be addressed. Of course, there are other issues that the Land Use Committee is considering as part of its deliberations, including the installation of a bicycle lane on Walnut Street, the traffic improvements at the Walnut and Washington Street intersection, how the mitigation funds should be spent, and the use of the proposed community space at the site but I do not think that they are critical to the petitioner's decision as to whether or not to move forward with this project.

Finally, I want to be clear that I am not expecting or encouraging Councilors to issue a final judgment on this project before the public hearing is closed. However I do think it appropriate that the petitioner and the public get a sense of the concerns of all Councilors, in a public forum, so that the petitioner can make an informed decision as to how to proceed.

cc: Stephen Buchbinder, Esq.