



COMPTROLLER OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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WILLIAM C. THOMPSON, JR.  
COMPTROLLER

March 6, 2009

Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg  
Mayor  
City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Bloomberg:

I write to register my strong objections to the Department of Building's recently proposed rule change that DOB maintains will streamline the opportunity for City residents to contest proposed building construction. In fact, this proposed rule change will severely restrict the public's participation in the City's planning and development approval process.

I am also deeply troubled by reports indicating that, under the guise of a "substantial need" to implement the proposed rule change immediately, you have approved a waiver of the statutory 30-day period prior to the rule becoming effective. This appears to be yet another attempt to stifle public participation in this process. As you are aware, DOB's rule change is poised to take effect beginning Monday.

As you know, current rules do not impose any time limitations for the public to raise objections regarding the approval of a construction project. Although this process may suggest a need for a better approach to address belated objections, the Department's proposal fails to provide a reasonable time period for individuals to learn of pending development projects or to allow Community Boards to provide vital input. DOB's newly proposed approach will therefore inevitably favor developers at the expense of those living in the neighborhoods adjoining construction sites.

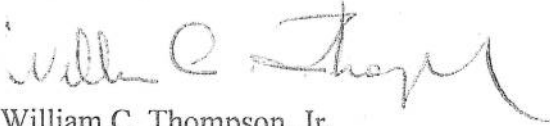
Community Boards, in particular, have long demonstrated their ability to incorporate public concerns into highly complex and technical land use decisions. To severely curtail their voice in evaluating proposed development projects will reduce transparency in the City's land use review process and diminish our City's quality of life.

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At the very least, DOB should take a number of steps to correct this ill-considered approach. This includes substantially lengthening DOB's proposed 30-day challenge period, creating a role for Community Board participation in this process and developing a legitimate community notification mechanism to ensure that the public may register legitimate challenges to proposed developments.

I urge you to reconsider your administration's hasty adoption of this rule change and provide City residents and all stakeholders with an appropriate opportunity to voice their concerns and objections.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William C. Thompson, Jr.", written in dark ink.

William C. Thompson, Jr.